THE
ITALIAN,

OR THE

CONFESSIONAL of the BLACK PENITENTS.

A ROMANCE.

BY

ANN RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO, &c. &c.

He, wrapt in clouds of myſtery and ſilence,
Broods o'er his paſſions, bodies them in deeds,
And ſends them forth on wings of Fate to others:
Like the inviſible Will, that guides us,
Unheard, unknown, unſearchable!

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

ITALIAN, &c.

CHAP. I.

"In earlieſt Greece to thee, with partial choice,
The grief-full Muſe addreſs'd her infant tongue;
The maids and matrons on her awful voice,
Silent and pale, in wild amazement hung."

COLLINS'S ODE to FEAR.

THE wounds of Vivaldi, and of his ſervant, were pronounced, by the Benedictine who had examined and dreſſed them, not to be dangerous, but thoſe of one of the ruffians were declared doubtful. Some few of the brothers diſplayed much compaſſion and kindneſs towards the priſoners; but the greater part ſeemed fearful of expreſſing any degree of ſympathy for perſons who had fallen within the cognizance of the Holy Office, and even kept aloof from the chamber, in which they were confined. To this ſelf-reſtriction, however, they were not long ſubjected; for Vivaldi and Paulo were compelled to begin their journey as ſoon as ſome ſhort reſt

had ſufficiently revived them. They were placed in the ſame carriage, but the preſence of two officers prevented all interchange of conjecture as to the deſtination of Ellena, and with reſpect to the immediate occaſion of their misfortune. Paulo, indeed, now and then hazarded a ſurmiſe, and did not ſcruple to affirm, that the Abbeſs of San Stefano was their chief enemy; that the Carmelite friars, who had overtaken them on the road, were her agents; and that having traced their route, they had given intelligence where Vivaldi and Ellena might be found.

"I gueſſed we never ſhould eſcape the Abbeſs," ſaid Paulo, "though I would not diſturb you, Signior mio, nor the poor lady Ellena, by ſaying ſo. But your Abbeſſes are as cunning as Inquiſitors, and are ſo fond of governing, that they had rather, like them, ſend a man to the devil, than ſend him no where.

Vivaldo gave Paulo a ſignificant look, which was meant to repreſs his imprudent loquacity, and then ſunk again into ſilence and the abſtractions of deep grief. The officers, mean while, never ſpoke, but were obſervant of all that Paulo ſaid, who perceived their watchfulneſs, but becauſe he deſpiſed them as ſpies, he thoughtleſsly deſpiſed them alſo as enemies, and was ſo far from concealing opinions, which they might repeat to his prejudice, that he had a pride in exaggerating them, and in daring the worſt, which the exaſperated tempers of theſe men, ſhut up in the ſame carriage with him, and compelled to hear whatever he choſe to ſay againſt the inſtitution to which they belonged, could effect. Whenever Vivaldi, recalled from his abſtractions by ſome bold aſſertion, endeavoured

voured to check his imprudence, Paulo was contented to ſolace his conſcience, inſtead of protecting himſelf, by ſaying, "It is their own fault; they would thruſt themſelves into my company; let them have enough of it; and if ever they take me before their reverences, the Inquiſitors, *they* ſhall have enough for it too. I will play up ſuch a tune in the Inquiſition as is not heard there every day. I will jingle all the bells on their fool's caps, and tell them a little honeſt truth, if they make me ſmart for it ever ſo."

Vivaldi, aroused once more, and ſeriouſly alarmed for the conſequences which honeſt Paulo might be drawing upon himſelf, now inſiſted on his ſilence, and was obeyed.

They travelled during the whole night, ſtopping only to change horſes. At every poſt houſe, Vivaldi looked for a carriage that might incloſe Ellena, but none appeared, nor any ſound of wheels told him that ſhe followed.

With the morning light he perceived the dome of St. Peter, appearing faintly over the plains that ſurrounded Rome, and he underſtood, for the firſt time, that he was going to the priſons of the Inquiſition in that city. The travellers deſcended upon the Campania, and then reſted for a few hours at a ſmall town on its borders.

When they again ſet forward, Vivaldi perceived that the guard was changed, the officer who had remained with him in the apartment of the inn only appearing among the new faces which ſurrounded him. The dreſs and manners of theſe men differed conſiderably from thoſe of the other. Their conduct was more temperate, but their countenances expreſſed a darker cruelty, mingled with a ſly demureneſs, and a ſo-

lemn ſelf-importance, that announced them at once as belonging to the Inquiſition. They were almoſt invariably ſilent; and when they did ſpeak, it was only in a few ſententious words. To the abounding queſtions of Paulo, and the few earneſt entreaties of his maſter, to be informed of the place of Ellena's deſtination, they made not the leaſt reply; and liſtened to all the flouriſhing ſpeeches of the ſervant againſt Inquiſitors and the Holy Office with the moſt profound gravity.

Vivaldi was ſtruck with the circumſtance of the guard being changed, and ſtill more with the appearance of the party, who now compoſed it. When he compared the manners of the late, with thoſe of the preſent guard, he thought he diſcovered in the firſt the mere ferocity of ruffians; but in the latter, the principles of cunning and cruelty, which ſeemed particularly to characterize Inquiſitors; he was inclined to believe, that a ſtratagem had enthralled him, and that now, for the firſt time, he was in the cuſtody of the *Holy Office*.

It was near midnight when the priſoners entered the *Porto del Popolo*, and found themſelves in the midſt of the Carnival at Rome. The *Corſo*, through which they were obliged to paſs, was crowded with gay carriages and maſks, with proceſſions of muſicians, monks, and mountebanks, was lighted up with innumerable flambeaux, and reſounded with the heterogeneous rattling of wheels, the muſic of ſerenaders, and the jokes and laughter of the revellers, as they ſportively threw about their ſugar-plumbs. The heat of the weather made it neceſſary to have the windows of the coach open; and the priſoners, therefore, ſaw all that paſſed without.

It

It was a ſcene which contraſted cruelly with the feelings and circumſtances of Vivaldi; torn as he was from her he moſt loved, in dreadful uncertainty as to her fate, and himſelf about to be brought before a tribunal, whoſe myſterious and terrible proceedings appalled even the braveſt ſpirits. Altogether, this was one of the moſt ſtriking examples, which the chequer-work of human life could ſhew, or human feelings endure. Vivaldi ſickened as he looked upon the ſplendid crowd, while the carriage made its way ſlowly with it; but Paulo, as he gazed, was reminded of the Corſo of Naples, ſuch as it appeared at the time of Carnival, and, comparing the preſent ſcene with his native one, he found fault with every thing he beheld. The dreſſes were taſteleſs, the equipages without ſplendor, the people without ſpirit; yet, ſuch was the propenſity of his heart to ſympathize with whatever was gay, that, for ſome moments, he forgot that he was a priſoner on his way to the Inquiſition; almoſt forgot that he was a Neapolitan; and while he exclaimed againſt the dullneſs of a Roman carnival, would have ſprung through the carriage window to partake of its ſpirit, if his fetters and his wounds had not withheld him. A deep ſigh from Vivaldi recalled his wandering imagination; and, when he noticed again the ſorrow in his maſter's look, all his lightly joyous ſpirits fled.

"My *maeſtro*, my dear *maeſtro!*"—he ſaid, and knew not how to finiſh what he wiſhed to expreſs.

At that moment they paſſed the theatre of San Carlo, the doors of which were thronged with equipages, where Roman ladies, in their gala habits, courtiers in their fantaſtic dreſſes, and maſks of all deſcriptions, were haſtening

to the opera. In the midſt of this gay buſtle, where the carriage was unable to proceed, the officials of the Inquiſition looked on in ſolemn, ſilence, not a muſcle of their features relaxing in ſympathy, or yielding a ſingle wrinkle of the ſelf-importance that lifted their brows; and, while they regarded with ſecret contempt thoſe, who could be thus lightly pleaſed, the people, in return, more wiſely, perhaps, regarded with contempt the proud moroſeneſs, that refuſed to partake of innocent pleaſures, becauſe they were trifling, and ſhrunk from countenances furrowed with the ſternneſs of cruelty. But when their office was diſtinguiſhed, part of the crowd preſſed back from the carriage in affright, while another part advanced with curioſity; though, as the majority retreated, ſpace was left for the carriage to move on. After quitting the Corſo, it proceeded for ſome miles through dark and deſerted ſtreets, where only here and there a lamp, hung on high before the image of a ſaint, ſhed its glimmering light, and where a melancholy and univerſal ſilence prevailed. At intervals, indeed, the moon, as the clouds paſſed away, ſhewed, for a moment, ſome of thoſe mighty monuments of Rome's eternal name, thoſe ſacred ruins, thoſe gigantic ſkeletons, which once encloſed a ſoul, whoſe energies governed a world! Even Vivaldi could not behold with indifference the grandeur of theſe reliques, as the rays fell upon the hoary walls and columns, or paſs among theſe ſcenes of ancient ſtory, without feeling a melancholy awe, a ſacred enthuſiaſm, that withdrew him from himſelf. But the illuſion was tranſient; his own misfortunes preſſed too heavily upon him to be long unfelt, and his enthuſiaſm vaniſhed like the moon light.

A re-

A returning gleam lighted up, ſoon after, the rude and extenſive area, which the carriage was croſſing. It appeared, from it's deſolation, and the ruins ſcattered diſtantly along its ſkirts, to be a part of the city entirely abandoned by the modern inhabitants to the reliques of its former grandeur. Not even the ſhadow of a human being croſſed the waſte, nor any building appeared, which might be ſuppoſed to ſhelter one. The deep tone of a bell, however, rolling on the ſilence of the night, announced the haunts of man to be not far off; and Vivaldi perceived in the diſtance, to which he was approaching, an extent of lofty walls and towers, that, as far as the gloom would permit his eye to penetrate, bounded the horizon. He judged theſe to be the priſons of the inquiſition. Paulo pointed them out at the ſame moment. "Ah, Signor!" ſaid he deſpondingly, "that is the place! what ſtrength! If, my Lord, the Marcheſe were but to ſee where we are going! Ah!"——

He concluded with a deep ſigh, and ſunk again into the ſtate of apprehenſion and mute expectation, which he had ſuffered from the moment that he quitted the Corſo.

The carriage having reached the walls, followed their bendings to a conſiderable extent. Theſe walls, of immenſe height, and ſtrengthened by innumerable maſſy bulwarks, exhibited neither window or grate, but a vaſt and dreary blank; a ſmall round tower only, perched here and there upon the ſummit, breaking their monotony.

The priſoners paſſed what ſeemed to be the principal entrance, from the grandeur of its portal, and the gigantic loftineſs of the towers that roſe over it; and ſoon after the carriage

ſtopped at an arch-way in the walls, ſtrongly barricadoed. One of the eſcort alighted, and having ſtruck upon the bars, a folding door within was immediately opened, and a man bearing a torch appeared behind the barricado, whoſe countenance as he looked through it, might have been copied for the

"Grim-viſaged comfortleſs Deſpair"

of the Poet.

No words were exchanged between him and the guard; but on perceiving who were without, he opened the iron gate, and the priſoners, having alighted, paſſed with the two officials beneath the arch, the guard following with a torch. They deſcended a flight of broad ſteps, at the foot of which another iron gate admitted them to a kind of hall; ſuch, however, it at firſt appeared to Vivaldi, as his eyes glanced through its gloomy extent, imperfectly aſcertaining it by the lamp, which hung from the centre of the roof. No perſon appeared, and a death like ſilence prevailed; for neither the officials nor the guard yet ſpoke; nor did any diſtant ſound contradict the notion, that they were traverſing the chambers of the dead. To Vivaldi it occurred, that this was one of the burial vaults of the victims, who ſuffered in the Inquiſition, and his whole frame thrilled with horror. Several avenues, opening from the apartment, ſeemed to lead to diſtant quarters of this immenſe fabric, but ſtill no footſtep whiſpering along the pavement, or voice murmuring through the arched roofs, indicated it to be the reſidence of the living.

Having entered one of the paſſages, Vivaldi perceived a perſon clothed in black, and who bore

bore a lighted taper, croſſing ſilently in the remote perſpective, and he underſtood too well from his habit, that he was a member of this dreadful tribunal.

The ſound of footſteps ſeemed to reach the ſtranger, for he turned, and then pauſed, while the officers advanced. They then made ſigns to each other, and exchanged a few words, which neither Vivaldi or his ſervant could underſtand, when the ſtranger, pointing with his taper along another avenue, paſſed away. Vivaldi followed him with his eyes, till a door at the extremity of the paſſage opened, and he ſaw the inquiſitor enter an apartment, whence a great light proceeded, and where ſeveral other figures, habited like himſelf, appeared waiting to receive him. The door immediately cloſed; and, whether the imagination of Vivaldi was affected, or that the ſounds were real, he thought, as it cloſed, he diſtinguiſhed half-ſtifled groans, as of a perſon in agony.

The avenue, through which the priſoners paſſed, opened at length, into an apartment gloomy like the firſt they had entered, but more extenſive. The roof was ſupported by arches, and long arcades branched off from every ſide of the chamber, as from a central point, and were loſt in the gloom, which the rays of the ſmall lamps, ſuſpended in each, but feebly penetrated.

They reſted here, and a perſon ſoon after advanced, who appeared to be the jailor, into whoſe hands Vivaldi and Paulo were delivered. A few myſterious words having been exchanged, one of the officials croſſed the hall, and aſcended a wide ſtair-caſe, while the other, with the jailor and the guard, remained below as if awaiting his return.

A long

A long interval elapſed, during which the ſtillneſs of the place was ſometimes interrupted by a cloſing door, and, at others, by indiſtinct ſounds, which yet appeared to Vivaldi like lamentations and extorted groans. Inquiſitors, in their long black robes, iſſued from time to time from the paſſages, and croſſed the hall to other avenues. They eyed the priſoners with curioſity, but without pity. Their viſages, with few exceptions, ſeemed ſtamped with the characters of demons. Vivaldi could not look upon the grave cruelty, or the ferocious impatience, their countenances ſeverally expreſſed, without reading in them the fate of ſome fellow creature, the fate which theſe men ſeemed going, even at this moment, to confirm; and as they paſſed with ſoundleſs ſteps, he ſhrunk from obſervation, as if their very looks poſſeſſed ſome ſupernatural power, and could have ſtruck death. But he followed their fleeting figures, as they proceeded on their work of horror, to where the laſt glimmering ray faded into darkneſs, expecting to ſee other doors of other chambers open to receive them. While meditating upon theſe horrors, Vivaldi loſt every ſelfiſh conſideration in aſtoniſhment and indignation of the ſufferings, which the frenzied wickedneſs of man prepares for man, who, even at the moment of infliction, inſults his victim with aſſertions of the juſtice and neceſſity of ſuch procedure. "Is this poſſible!" ſaid Vivaldi internally, "Can this be in human nature!—Can ſuch horrible perverſion of right be permitted! Can man, who calls himſelf endowed with reaſon, and immeaſurably ſuperior to every other created being, argue himſelf into the commiſſion of ſuch horrible folly, ſuch inveterate cruelty, as exceeds

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all the acts of the moſt irrational and ferocious brute. Brutes do not deliberately ſlaughter their ſpecies; it remains for man only, man, proud of his prerogative of reaſon, and boaſting of his ſenſe of juſtice, to unite the moſt terrible extremes of folly and wickedneſs!"

Vivaldi had been no ſtranger to the exiſtence of this tribunal; he had long underſtood the nature of the eſtabliſhment, and had often received particular accounts of its cuſtoms and laws; but, though he had believed before, it was now only that conviction appeared to impreſs his underſtanding. A new view of human nature ſeemed to burſt, at once, upon his mind, and he could not have experienced greater aſtoniſhment, if this had been the firſt moment, in which he had heard of the inſtitution. But, when he thought of Ellena, conſidered that ſhe was in the power of this tribunal, and that it was probable ſhe was at this moment within the ſame dreadful walls, grief, indignation, and deſpair, irritated him almoſt to frenzy. He ſeemed ſuddenly animated with ſupernatural ſtrength, and ready to attempt impoſſibilities for her deliverance. It was by a ſtrong effort for ſelf command, that he forbore burſting the bonds, which held him, and making a deſperate attempt to ſeek her through the vaſt extent of theſe priſons. Reflection, however, had not ſo entirely forſaken him, but that he ſaw the impoſſibility of ſucceeding in ſuch an effort, the moment he had conceived it, and he forbore to ruſh upon the certain deſtruction to which it muſt have led. His paſſions, thus reſtrained, ſeemed to become virtues, and to diſplay themſelves in the energy of his courage and his fortitude.

titude. His ſoul became ſtern and vigorous in deſpair, and his manner and countenance aſſumed a calm dignity, which ſeemed to awe, in ſome degree, even his guards. The pain of his wounds was no longer felt; it appeared as if the ſtrength of his intellectual ſelf had ſubdued the infirmities of the body, and, perhaps, in theſe moments of elevation, he could have endured the torture without ſhrinking.

Paulo, meanwhile, mute and grave, was watchful of all that paſſed; he obſerved the revolutions in his maſter's mind, with grief firſt, and then with ſurprize, but he could not imitate the noble fortitude, which now gave weight and ſteadineſs to Vivaldi's thoughts. And when he looked on the power and gloom around him, and on the viſages of the paſſing Inquiſitors, he began to repent, that he had ſo freely delivered his opinion of this tribunal, in the preſence of his agents, and to perceive, that if he played up the kind of tune he had threatened, it would probably be the laſt he ſhould ever be permitted to perform in this world.

At length, the chief officer deſcended the ſtaircaſe, and immediately bade Vivaldi follow him. Paulo was accompanying his maſter, but was withheld by the guard, and told he was to be diſpoſed of in a different way. This was the moment of his ſevereſt trial; he declared he would not be ſeparated from his maſter.

"What did I demand to be brought here for," he cried, "if it was not that I might go ſhares with the Signor in all his troubles? This is not a place to come to for pleaſure, I warrant; and I can promiſe ye, gentlemen, I would not have come within an hundred miles of you, if it had not been for my maſter's ſake."

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The guards roughly interrupted him, and were carrying him away, when Vivaldi's commanding voice arreſted them. He returned to ſpeak a few words of conſolation to his faithful ſervant, and, ſince they were to be ſeparated, to take leave of him.

Paulo embraced his knees, and, while he wept, and his words were almoſt ſtifled by ſobs, declared no force ſhould drag him from his maſter, while he had life; and repeatedly appealed to the guards, with—"What did I demand to be brought here for? Did ever any body come here to ſeek pleaſure? What right have you to prevent my going ſhares with my maſter in his troubles?"

"We do not intend to deny you that pleaſure, friend," replied one of the guards.

"Don't you? Then heaven bleſs you!" cried Paulo, ſpringing from his knees, and ſhaking the man by the hand with a violence, that would nearly have diſlocated the ſhoulder of a perſon leſs robuſt.

"So come with us," added the guard, drawing him away from Vivaldi. Paulo now became outrageous, and, ſtruggling with the guards, burſt from them, and again fell at the feet of his maſter, who raiſed and embraced him, endeavouring to prevail with him to ſubmit quietly to what was inevitable, and to encourage him with hope.

"I truſt that our ſeparation will be ſhort," ſaid Vivaldi, "and that we ſhall meet in happier circumſtances. My innocence muſt ſoon appear."

"We ſhall never, never meet again, Signormio, in this world," ſaid Paulo, ſobbing violently, "ſo don't make me hope ſo. That old Abbeſs knows what ſhe is about too well to let us eſcape; or ſhe would not have catched us up ſo cunningly as

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ſhe did; ſo what ſignifies innocence! O! if my old lord, the Marcheſe, did but know where we are!"

Vivaldi interrupted him, and turning to the guards ſaid, "I recommend my faithful ſervant to your compaſſion; he is innocent. It will ſome time, perhaps, be in my power to recompence you for any indulgence you may allow him, and I ſhall value it a thouſand times more highly, than any you could ſhew to myſelf! Farewell, Paulo, ——farewel! Officer, I am ready."

"O ſtay! Signor, for one moment—ſtay!" ſaid Paulo.

"We can wait no longer," ſaid the guard, and again drew Paulo away, who looking piteouſly after Vivaldi, alternately repeated, Farewel, dear maeſtro! farewel dear, dear maeſtro!" and "What did I demand to be brought here for?—What did I demand to be brought here for?——what was it for, if not to go ſhares with my maeſtro?" till Vivaldi was beyond the reach of ſight and of hearing.

Vivaldi, having followed the officer up the ſtaircaſe, paſſed through a gallery to an anti-chamber, where, being delivered into the cuſtody of ſome perſons in waiting, his conductor diſappeared beyond a folding door, that led to an inner apartment. Over this door was an inſcription in Hebrew characters, traced in blood-colour. Dante's inſcription on the entrance of the infernal regions, would have been ſuitable to a place, where every circumſtance and feature ſeemed to ſay, "*Hope, that comes to all, comes not here!*"

Vivaldi conjectured, that in this chamber they were preparing for him the inſtruments, which were to extort a confeſſion; and though he knew little of the regular proceedings of this tribunal, he had always underſtood, that the torture was inflicted

flicted upon the accuſed perſon, till he made confeſſion of the crime, of which he was ſuſpected. By ſuch a mode of proceeding, the innocent were certain of ſuffering longer than the guilty; for, as they had nothing to confeſs, the Inquiſitor, miſtaking innocence for obſtinacy, perſevered in his inflictions, and it frequently happened that he compelled the innocent to become criminal, and aſſert a falſehood, that they might be releaſed from anguiſh, which they could no longer ſuſtain. Vivaldi conſidered this circumſtance undauntedly; every faculty of his ſoul was bent up to firmneſs and endurance. He believed that he underſtood the extent of the charge, which would be brought againſt him, a charge as falſe, as a ſpecious confirmation of it, would be terrible in it's conſequence both to Ellena and himſelf. Yet every art would be practiſed to bring him to an acknowledgment of having carried off a nun, and he knew alſo, that, ſince the proſecutor and the witneſſes are never confronted with the priſoner in caſes of ſevere accuſation, and ſince their very names are concealed from him, it would be ſcarcely poſſible for him to prove his innocence. But he did not heſitate an inſtant whether to ſacrifice himſelf for Ellena, determining rather to expire beneath the mercileſs inflictions of the Inquiſitors, than to aſſert a falſehood, which muſt involve her in deſtruction.

The officer, at length, appeared, and, having beckoned Vivaldi to advance, uncovered his head, and bared his arms. He then led him forward through the folding door into the chamber; having done which, he immediately withdrew, and the door, which ſhut out Hope, cloſed after him.

Vivaldi found himſelf in a ſpacious apartment, where only two perſons were viſible, who were ſeated at a large table, that occupied the centre of the room. They were both habited in black; the one, who ſeemed by his piercing eye, and extraordinary phyſiognomy, to be an Inquiſitor, wore on his head a kind of black turban, which heightened the natural ferocity of his viſage; the other was uncovered, and his arms bared to the elbows. A book, with ſome inſtruments of ſingular appearance, lay before him. Round the table were ſeveral unoccupied chairs, on the backs of which appeared figurative ſigns, at the upper end of the apartment, a gigantic crucifix ſtretched nearly to the vaulted roof; and, at the lower end, ſuſpended from an arch in the wall, was a dark curtain, but whether it veiled a window, or ſhrowded ſome object or perſon, neceſſary to the deſigns of the Inquiſitor, there were little means of judging. It was, however, ſuſpended from an arch ſuch as ſometimes contains a caſement, or leads to a deep receſs.

The Inquiſitor called on Vivaldi to advance, and, when he had reached the table, put a book into his hands, and bade him ſwear to reveal the truth, and keep for ever ſecret whatever he might ſee or hear in the apartment.

Vivaldi heſitated to obey ſo unqualified a command. The Inquiſitor reminded him, by a look, not to be miſtaken, that he was abſolute here; but Vivaldi ſtill heſitated. "Shall I conſent to my own condemnation?" ſaid he to himſelf, "The malice of demons like theſe may convert the moſt innocent circumſtances into matter of accuſation, for my deſtruction, and I muſt anſwer whatever queſtions they chooſe to aſk. And ſhall I ſwear, alſo, to conceal whatever I may witneſs in this chamber,

chamber, when I know that the moſt diabolical cruelties are hourly practiſed here ?"

The Inquiſitor, in a voice which would have made a heart leſs fortified than was Vivaldi's tremble, again commanded him to ſwear; at the ſame time, he made a ſignal to the perſon, who ſat at the oppoſite end of the table, and who appeared to be an inferior officer.

Vivaldi was ſtill ſilent, but he began to conſider that, unconſcious as he was of crime, it was ſcarcely poſſible for his words to be tortured into a ſelf-accuſation; and that, whatever he might witneſs, no retribution would be prevented, no evil withheld by the oath, which bound him to ſecreſy, ſince his moſt ſevere denunciation could avail nothing againſt the ſupreme power of this tribunal. As he did not perceive any good, which could ariſe from refuſing the oath; and ſaw much immediate evil from reſiſtance, he conſented to receive it. Notwithſtanding this, when he put the book to his lips, and uttered the tremendous vow preſcribed to him, heſitation and reluctance returned upon his mind, and an icy coldneſs ſtruck to his heart. He was ſo much affected, that circumſtances, apparently the moſt trivial, had at this moment influence upon his imagination. As he accidentally threw his eyes upon the curtain, which he had obſerved before without emotion, and now thought it moved, he almoſt ſtarted in expectation of ſeeing ſome perſon, an Inquiſitor perhaps, as terrific as the one before him, or an Accuſer as malicious as Schedoni, ſteal from behind it.

The Inquiſitor having adminiſtered the oath, and the attendant having noted it in his book, the examination began. After demanding, as is uſual, the names and titles of Vivaldi and his family,

mily, and his place of reſidence, to which he fully replied, the Inquiſitor aſked, whether he underſtood the nature of the accuſation on which he had been arreſted.

" The order for my arreſtation informed me," replied Vivaldi.

" Look to your words!" ſaid the Inquiſitor, " and remember your oath. What was the ground of accuſation?"

" I underſtood," ſaid Vivaldi, " that I was accuſed of having ſtolen a nun from her ſanctuary."

A faint degree of ſurpriſe appeared on the brow of the Inquiſitor. " You confeſs it, then?" he ſaid, after the pauſe of a moment, and making a ſignal to the Secretary, who immediately noted Vivaldi's words.

" I ſolemnly deny it," replied Vivaldi, " the accuſation is falſe and malicious."

" Remember the oath you have taken!" repeated the Inquiſitor, " learn alſo, that mercy is ſhewn to ſuch as make full confeſſion; but that the torture is applied to thoſe, who have the folly and the obſtinacy to withhold the truth."

" If you torture me till I acknowledge the juſtneſs of this accuſation," ſaid Vivaldi, " I muſt expire under your inflictions, for ſuffering never ſhall compel me to aſſert a falſehood. It is not the truth, which you ſeek; it is not the guilty, whom you puniſh; the innocent, having no crimes to confeſs, are the victims of your cruelty, or, to eſcape from it, become criminal, and proclaim a lie."

" Recollect yourſelf," ſaid the Inquiſitor, ſternly. " You are not brought hither to accuſe, but to anſwer accuſation. You ſay you are innocent; yet acknowledge yourſelf to be acquainted with the ſubject of the charge which

is

is to be urged againſt you! How could you know this, but from the voice of conſcience?"

"From the words of your own ſummons," replied Vivaldi, "and from thoſe of your officials who arreſted me."

"How!" exclaimed the Inquiſitor, "note that," pointing to the Secretary; "he ſays by the words of our ſummons; now we know, that you never read that ſummons. He ſays alſo by the words of our officials; it appears, then he is ignorant, that death would follow ſuch a breach of confidence."

"It is true, I never did read the ſummons," replied Vivaldi, "and as true, that I never aſſerted I did; the friar, who read it, told of what it accuſed me, and your officials confirmed the teſtimony."

"No more of this equivocation!" ſaid the Inquiſitor, "Speak only to the queſtion."

"I will not ſuffer my aſſertions to be miſrepreſented," replied Vivaldi, "or my words to be perverted againſt myſelf. I have ſworn to ſpeak the truth only; ſince you believe I violate my oath, and doubt my direct and ſimple words, I will ſpeak no more."

The Inquiſitor half roſe from his chair, and his countenance grew paler. "Audacious heretic!" he ſaid, "will you diſpute, inſult, and diſobey, the commands of our moſt holy tribunal! You will be taught the conſequence of your deſperate impiety. To the torture with him!"

A ſtern ſmile was on the features of Vivaldi; his eyes were calmly fixed on the Inquiſitor, and his attitude was undaunted and firm. His courage, and the cool contempt, which his looks expreſſed, ſeemed to touch his examiner, who perceived that he had not a common mind to operate upon.

upon. He abandoned, therefore, for the preſent, terrific meaſures, and, reſuming his uſual manner, proceeded in the examination.

" Where were you arreſted ?"

" At the chapel of San Sebaſtian, on the lake of Celano."

" You are certain as to this ?" aſked the Inquiſitor, " you are ſure it was not at the village of Legano, on the high road between Celano and Rome ?"

Vivaldi, while he confirmed his aſſertion, recollected with ſome ſurprize that Legano was the place where the guard had been changed, and he mentioned the circumſtance. The Inquiſitor, however, proceeded in his queſtions, without appearing to notice it. " Was any perſon arreſted with you ?"

You cannot be ignorant," replied Vivaldi," " that Signora di Roſalba, was ſeized at the ſame time, upon the falſe charge of being a nun, who had broken her vows, and eloped from her convent ; nor that Paulo Mendrico, my faithful ſervant I was alſo made a priſoner, though upon what pretence he was arreſted I am utterly ignorant."

The Inquiſitor remained for ſome moments in thoughtful ſilence, and then enquired ſlightly concerning the family of Ellena, and her uſual place of reſidence. Vivaldi, fearful of making ſome aſſertion that might be prejudicial to her, referred him to herſelf ; but the inquiry was repeated.

" She is now within theſe walls," replied Vivaldi, hoping to earn from the manner of his examiner whether his fears were juſt, " and can anſwer theſe queſtions better thanmyſelf."

The Inquiſitor merely bade the Notary write down her name, and then remained for a few moments

ments meditating. At length, he ſaid, " Do you know where you now are ?"

Vivaldi, ſmiling at the queſtion, replied, " I underſtand that I am in the priſons of the Inquiſition, at Rome."

" Do you know what are the crimes that ſubject perſons to the cognizance of the Holy Office ?"

Vivaldi was ſilent.

" Your conſcience informs *you*, and your ſilence confirms *me*. Let me admoniſh you, once more, to make a full confeſſion of your guilt ; remember that this is a merciful tribunal, and ſhews favour to ſuch as acknowledge their crimes ?"

Vivaldi ſmiled ; but the Inquiſitor proceeded.

" It does not reſemble ſome ſevere, yet juſt courts, where immediate execution follows the confeſſion of a criminal. No ! it is merciful, and, though it puniſhes guilt, it never applies the torture but in caſes of neceſſity, when the obſtinate ſilence of the priſoner requires ſuch a meaſure. You ſee, therefore, what you may avoid, and what expect."

" But if the priſoner has nothing to confeſs ?" ſaid Vivaldi,——" Can your tortures make him guilty ? They may force a weak mind to be guilty of falſehood ; to eſcape preſent anguiſh, a man may unwarily condemn himſelf to the death ! You will find that I am not ſuch an one."

" Young man," replied the Inquiſitor, " you will underſtand too ſoon, that we never act, but upon ſure authority ; and will wiſh, too late, that you had made an honeſt confeſſion. Your ſilence cannot keep from us a knowledge of your offences ; we are in poſſeſſion of facts ; and your obſtinacy can neither wreſt from us the truth, or

pervert

pervert it. Your moſt ſecret offences are already written on the tablets of the Holy Office; your conſcience cannot reflect them more juſtly.—— Tremble, therefore, and revere. But underſtand, that, though we have ſufficient proof of your guilt, we require you to confeſs; and that the puniſhment of obſtinacy is as certain, as that of any other offence."

Vivaldi made no reply, and the Inquiſitor, after a momentary ſilence, added, "Was you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?"

"Before I anſwer the queſtion," ſaid Vivaldi, "I require the name of my accuſer."

"You are to recollect that you have no right to demand any thing in this place," obſerved the Inquiſitor, "nor can you be ignorant that the name of the Informer is always kept ſacred from the knowledge of the Accuſed. Who would venture to do his duty, if his name was arbitrarily to be expoſed to the vengeance of the criminal againſt whom he informs? It is only in a particular proceſs that the Accuſer is brought forward."

"The names of the Witneſſes?" demanded Vivaldi. "The ſame juſtice conceals them alſo from the knowledge of the Accuſed," replied the Inquiſitor.

"And is no juſtice left for the Accuſed?" ſaid Vivaldi. "Is he to be tried and condemned without being confronted with either his Proſecutor, or the Witneſſes!"

"Your queſtions are too many," ſaid the Inquiſitor, "and your anſwers too few. The Informer is not alſo the Proſecutor; the Holy Office, before which the information is laid, is the Proſecutor, and the diſpenſer of juſtice; its Public Accuſer lays the circumſtances, and the teſtimonies

nies of the Witneſſes, before the Court. But too much of this."

"How!" exclaimed Vivaldi, "is the tribunal at once the Proſecutor, Witneſs, and Judge! What can private malice wiſh for more, than ſuch a court of *juſtice*, at which to atraign it's enemy? The ſtiletto of the Aſſaſſin is not ſo ſure, or ſo fatal to innocence. I now perceive, that it avails me nothing to be guiltleſs; a ſingle enemy is ſufficient to accompliſh my deſtruction."

"You have an enemy then?" obſerved the Inquiſitor.

Vivaldi was too well convinced that he had one, but there was not ſufficient proof, as to the perſon of this enemy, to juſtify him in aſſerting that it was Schedoni. The circumſtance of Ellena having been arreſted, would have compelled him to ſuſpect another perſon as being at leaſt acceſſary to the deſigns of the Confeſſor, had not credulity ſtarted in horror from the ſuppoſition, that a mother's reſentment could poſſibly betray her ſon into the priſons of the Inquiſition, though this mother had exhibited a temper of remorſeleſs cruelty towards a ſtranger, who had interrupted her views for that ſon.

"You have an enemy then?" repeated the Inquiſitor.

"That I am here ſufficiently proves it," replied Vivaldi. "But I am ſo little any man's enemy, that I know not who to call mine."

"It is evident, then, that you have no enemy," obſerved the ſubtle Inquiſitor, "and that this accuſation is brought againſt you by a reſpecter of truth, and a faithful ſervant of the Roman intereſt."

Vivaldi was ſhocked to perceive the inſidious art, by which he had been betrayed into a declara-

tion apparently so harmless, and the cruel dexterity with which it had been turned against him. A lofty and contemptuous silence was all that he opposed to the treachery of his examiner, on whose countenance appeared a smile of triumph and self-congratulation, the life of a fellow creature being, in his estimation, of no comparative importance with the self-applauses of successful art; the art, too, upon which he most valued himself—that of his profession.

The Inquisitor proceeded, "You persist, then, in withholding the truth?" He paused, but Vivaldi making no reply, he resumed.

"Since it is evident, from your own declaration, that you have no enemy, whom private resentment might have instigated to accuse you; and, from other circumstances which have occurred in your conduct, that you are conscious of more than you have confessed,—it appears, that the accusation which has been urged against you, is not a malicious slander. I exhort you, therefore, and once more conjure you, by our holy faith, to make an ingenuous confession of your offences, and to save yourself from the means, which must of necessity be enforced to obtain a confession before your trial commences. I adjure you, also, to consider, that by such open conduct only, can mercy be won to soften the justice of this most righteous tribunal!"

Vivaldi, perceiving that it was now necessary for him to reply, once more solemnly asserted his innocence of the crime alledged against him in the summons, and of the consciousness of any act which might lawfully subject him to the notice of the Holy Office.

The Inquisitor again demanded what was the crime alledged, and, Vivaldi having repeated the accusation

accuſation, he again bade the Secretary note it, as he did which, Vivaldi thought he perceived upon his features ſomething of a malignant ſatisfaction, for which he knew not how to account. When the Secretary had finiſhed, Vivaldi was ordered to ſubſcribe his name and quality to the depoſitions, and he obeyed.

The Inquiſitor then bade him conſider of the admonition he had received, and prepare either to confeſs on the morrow, or to undergo the queſtion. As he concluded, he gave a ſignal, and the officer, who had conducted Vivaldi into the chamber, immediately appeared.

"You know your orders," ſaid the Inquiſitor, "receive your priſoner, and ſee that they are obeyed."

The official bowed, and Vivaldi followed him from the apartment in melancholy ſilence.

CHAP. II.

Call up the Spirit of the ocean, bid
Him raiſe the ſtorm! The waves begin to heave.
To curl, to foam; the white ſurges run far
Upon the dark'ning waters, and mighty
Sounds of ſtriſe are heard. Wrapt in the midnight
Of the clouds, ſits Terror, meditating
Woe. Her doubtful form appears and fades,
Like the ſhadow of Death, when he mingles
With the gloom of the ſepulchre, and broods
In lonely ſilence. Her ſpirits are abroad!
They do her bidding! Hark, to that ſhriek!
The echoes of the ſhore have heard!

ELLENA, meanwhile, when ſhe had been carried from the chapel of San Sebaſtian, was placed upon a horſe in waiting, and, guarded by

the two men who had ſeized her, commenced a journey, which continued with little interruption during two nights and days. She had no means of judging whither ſhe was going, and liſtened in vain expectation, for the feet of horſes, and the voice of Vivaldi, who, ſhe had been told, was following on the ſame road.

The ſteps of travellers ſeldom broke upon the ſilence of theſe regions, and, during the journey, ſhe was met only by ſome market-people paſſing to a neighbouring town, or now and then by the vine-dreſſers or labourers in the olive grounds; and ſhe deſcended upon the vaſt plains of Apulia, ſtill ignorant of her ſituation. An encampment, not of warriors, but of ſhepherds, who were leading their flocks to the mountains of Abruzzo, enlivened a ſmall tract of theſe levels, which were ſhadowed on the north and eaſt by the mountainous ridge of the Garganus, ſtretching from the Apennine far into the Adriatic.

The appearance of the ſhepherds was nearly as wild and ſavage as that of the men, who conducted Ellena; but their paſtoral inſtruments of flageolets and tabors ſpoke of more civilized feelings, as they ſounded ſweetly over the deſert. Her guards reſted, and refreſhed themſelves with goats milk, barley cakes, and almonds, and the manners of theſe ſhepherds, like thoſe ſhe had formerly met with on the mountains, proved to be more hoſpitable than their air had indicated.

After Ellena had quitted this paſtoral camp, no veſtige of a human reſidence appeared for ſeveral leagues, except here and there the towers of a decayed fortreſs, perched upon the lofty acclivities ſhe was approaching, and half concealed in the woods. The evening of the ſecond day was drawing on, when her guards drew near the foreſt, which

which ſhe had long obſerved in the diſtance, ſpreading over the many-riſing ſteeps of the Garganus. They entered by a track, a road it could not be called, which led among oaks and gigantic cheſtnuts, apparently the growth of centuries, and ſo thickly interwoven, that their branches formed a canopy which ſeldom admitted the ſky. The gloom which they threw around, and the thickets of cyſtus, juniper, and lenticus, which flouriſhed beneath the ſhade, gave a character of fearful wildneſs to the ſcene.

Having reached an eminence, where the trees were more thinly ſcattered, Ellena perceived the foreſts ſpreading on all ſides among hills and vallies, and deſcending towards the Adriatic, which bounded the diſtance in front. The coaſt, bending into a bay, was rocky and bold. Lofty pinnacles, wooded to their ſummits, roſe over the ſhores, and cliffs of naked marble of ſuch gigantic proportions, that they were awful even at a diſtance, obtruded themſelves far into the waves, breaſting their eternal fury. Beyond the margin of the coaſt, as far as the eye could reach, appeared pointed mountains, darkened with foreſts, riſing ridge over ridge in many ſucceſſions. Ellena, as ſhe ſurveyed this wild ſcenery, felt as if ſhe was going into eternal baniſhment from ſociety. She was tranquil, but it was with the quietneſs of exhauſted grief, not of reſignation; and ſhe looked back upon the paſt, and awaited the future, with a kind of out-breathed deſpair.

She had travelled for ſome miles through the foreſt, her guards only now and then uttering to each other a queſtion, or an obſervation concerning the changes which had taken place in the bordering ſcenery, ſince they laſt paſt it, when night began to cloſe in upon them.

Ellena perceived her approach to the ſea, only by the murmurs of its ſurge upon the rocky coaſt, till, having reached an eminence, which was, however, no more than the baſe of two woody mountains that towered cloſely over it, ſhe ſaw dimly its gray ſurface ſpreading in the bay below. She now ventured to aſk how much further ſhe was to go, and whether ſhe was to be taken on board one of the little veſſels, apparently fiſhing ſmacks, that ſhe could juſt diſcern at anchor.

"You have not far to go now," replied one of the guards, ſurlily; "you will ſoon be at the end of your journey, and at reſt."

They deſcended to the ſhore, and preſently came to a lonely dwelling, which ſtood ſo near the margin of the ſea, as almoſt to be waſhed by the waves. No light appeared at any of the lattices; and, from the ſilence that reigned within, it ſeemed to be uninhabited. The guard had probably reaſon to know otherwiſe, for they halted at the door, and ſhouted with all their ſtrength. No voice, however, anſwered to their call, and, while they perſevered in efforts to rouſe the inhabitants, Ellena anxiouſly examined the building, as exactly as the twilight would permit. It was of an ancient and peculiar ſtructure, and, though ſcarcely important enough for a manſion, had evidently never been deſigned for the reſidence of peaſants.

The walls, of unhewn marble, were high, and ſtrengthened by baſtions; and the edifice had turreted corners, which, with the porch in front, and the ſloping roof, were falling faſt into numerous ſymptoms of decay. The whole building, with its dark windows and ſoundleſs avenues, had an air ſtrikingly forlorn and ſolitary.

A high

A high wall ſurrounded the ſmall court in which it ſtood, and probably had once ſerved as a defence to the dwelling; but the gates, which ſhould have cloſed againſt intruders, could no longer perform their office; one of the folds had dropped from its faſtenings, and lay on the ground almoſt concealed in a deep bed of weeds, and the other creaked on its hinges to every blaſt, at each ſwing ſeeming ready to follow the fate of its companion.

The repeated calls of the guard were at length anſwered by a rough voice from within; when the door of the porch was lazily unbarred, and opened by a man, whoſe viſage was ſo miſery-ſtruck, that Ellena could not look upon it with indifference, though wrapt in miſery of her own. The lamp he held threw a gleam athwart it, and ſhewed the gaunt ferocity of famine, to which the ſhadow of his hollow eyes added a terrific wildneſs. Ellena ſhrunk while ſhe gazed. She had never before ſeen villainy and ſuffering ſo ſtrongly pictured on the ſame face, and ſhe obſerved him with a degree of thrilling curioſity, which for a moment excluded from her mind all conſciouſneſs of the evils to be apprehended from him.

It was evident that this houſe had not been built for his reception; and ſhe conjectured that he was the ſervant of ſome cruel agent of the Marcheſa di Vivaldi.

From the porch ſhe followed into an old hall, ruinous and deſtitute of any kind of furniture. It was not extenſive but lofty, for it ſeemed to aſcend to the roof of the edifice, and the chambers above opened around it into a corridor.

Some half-ſullen ſalutations were exchanged between the guard and the ſtranger, whom they

called Spalatro, as they paſſed into a chamber, where it appeared that he had been ſleeping on a mattreſs laid in a corner. All the other furniture of the place were two or three broken chairs and a table. He eyed Ellena with a ſhrewd contracted brow, and then looked ſignificantly at the guard, but was ſilent, till he deſired them all to ſit down, adding, that he would dreſs ſome fiſh for ſupper. Ellena diſcovered that this man was the maſter of the place; it appeared alſo that he was the only inhabitant; and, when the guard ſoon after informed her their journey concluded here, her worſt apprehenſions were confirmed. The efforts ſhe made to ſuſtain her ſpirits, were no longer ſucceſsful. It ſeemed that ſhe was brought hither by ruſſians to a lonely houſe on the ſea-ſhore inhabited by a man, who had "villain" engraved in every line of his face, to be the victim of inexorable pride and an inſatiable deſire of revenge. After conſidering theſe circumſtances, and the words, which had juſt told her ſhe was to go no further, conviction ſtruck like lightning upon her heart; and, believing ſhe was brought hither to be aſſaſſinated, horror chilled all her frame, and her ſenſes forſook her.

On recovering, ſhe found herſelf ſurrounded by the guard and the ſtranger, and ſhe would have ſupplicated for their pity, but that ſhe feared to exaſperate them by betraying her ſuſpicions. She complained of fatigue, and requeſted to be ſhewn to her room. The men looked upon one another, heſitated, and then aſked her to partake of the fiſh that was preparing. But Ellena having declined the invitation with as good a grace as ſhe could aſſume, they conſented that ſhe ſhould withdraw. Spalatro, taking the lamp, lighted

lighted her acroſs the hall, to the corridor above, where he opened the door of a chamber, in which he ſaid ſhe was to ſleep.

" Where is my bed ?" ſaid the afflicted Ellena, fearfully as ſhe looked round.

" It is there—on the floor," replied Spalatro, pointing to a miſerable mattreſs, over which hung the tattered curtains of what had once been a canopy. If you want the lamp," he added, " I will leave it, and come for it in a minute or two."

" Will you not let me have a lamp for the night ?" ſhe ſaid in a ſupplicating and timid voice.

" For the night !" ſaid the man gruffly ; " What ! to ſet fire to the houſe."

Ellena ſtill entreated that he would allow her the comfort of a light.

" Aye, aye," replied Spalatro, with a look ſhe could not comprehend, " it would be a great comfort to you, truly ! You do not know what you aſk."

" What is it that you mean ?" ſaid Ellena, eagerly ; " I conjure you, in the name of our holy church, to tell me !"

Spalatro ſtepped ſuddenly back, and looked upon her with ſurpriſe, but without ſpeaking.

" Have mercy on me !" ſaid Ellena, greatly alarmed by his manner ; " I am friendleſs, and without help !"

" What do you fear," ſaid the man, recovering himſelf ; and then, without waiting her reply, added—" Is it ſuch an unmerciful deed to take away a lamp ?"

Ellena, who again feared to betray the extent of her ſuſpicions, only replied, that it would be merciful to leave it, for that her ſpirits were

low, and ſhe required light to cheer them in a new abode.

" We do not ſtand upon ſuch conceits here," replied Spalatro, " we have other matters to mind. Beſides, it's the only lamp in the houſe, and the company below are in darkneſs while I am loſing time here. I will leave it for two minutes, and no more." Ellena made a ſign for him to put down the lamp; and, when he left the room, ſhe heard the door barred upon her.

Sheemployed theſe two minutes in examining the chamber, and the poſſibility it might afford of an eſcape. It was a large apartment, unfurniſhed and unſwept of the cobwebs of many years. The only door ſhe diſcovered was the one, by which ſhe had entered, and the only window a lattice, which was grated. Such preparation for preventing eſcape ſeemed to hint how much there might be to eſcape from.

Having examined the chamber, without finding a ſingle circumſtance to encourage hope, tried the ſtrength of the bars, which ſhe could not ſhake, and ſought in vain for an inſide faſtening to her door, ſhe placed the lamp beſide it, and awaited the return of Spalatro. In a few moments he came and offered her a cup of ſour wine with a ſlice of bread; which, being ſomewhat ſoothed by this attention, ſhe did not think proper to reject.

Spalatro then quitted the room, and the door was again barred. Left once more alone, ſhe tried to overcome apprehenſion by prayer; and after offering up her veſpers with a fervent heart, ſhe became more confiding and compoſed.

But it was impoſſible that ſhe could ſo far forget the dangers of her ſituation as to ſeek

ſleep,

ſleep, however wearied ſhe might be, while the door of her room remained unſecured againſt the intruſion of the ruffians below; and, as ſhe had no means of faſtening it, ſhe determined to watch during the whole night. Thus left to ſolitude and darkneſs, ſhe ſeated herſelf upon the mattreſs to await the return of morning, and was ſoon loſt in ſad reflection; every minute occurrence of the paſt day, and of the conduct of her guards, moved in review before her judgment; and, combining theſe with the circumſtances of her preſent ſituation, ſcarcely a doubt as to the fate deſigned for her remained. It ſeemed highly improbable that the Marcheſa di Vivaldi had ſent her hither merely for impriſonment, ſince ſhe might have confined her in a convent with much leſs trouble; and ſtill more ſo when Ellena conſidered the character of the Marcheſa, ſuch as ſhe had already experienced it. The appearance of this houſe, and of the man who inhabited it, with the circumſtance of no woman being found reſiding here, each and all of theſe ſignified, that ſhe was brought hither, not for long impriſonment, but for death. Her utmoſt efforts for fortitude or reſignation could not overcome the cold tremblings, the ſickneſs of heart, the faintneſs and univerſal horror that aſſailed her. How often, with tears of mingled terror and grief, did ſhe call upon Vivaldi—Vivaldi, alas! far diſtant—to ſave her; how often exclaim in agony, that ſhe ſhould never, never ſee him more!

She was ſpared, however, the horror of believing that he was an inhabitant of the Inquiſition. Having detected the impoſition which had been practiſed towards herſelf, and that ſhe was neither on the way to the Holy Office, nor conducted

conducted by perſons belonging to it, ſhe concluded, that the whole affair of Vivaldi's arreſt, had been planned by the Marcheſa, merely as a pretence for confining him till ſhe ſhould be placed beyond the reach of his aſſiſtance. She hoped, therefore, that he had only been ſent to ſome private reſidence belonging to his family, and that, when her fate was decided, he would be releaſed, and ſhe be the only victim. This was the ſole conſideration that afforded any degree of aſſuagement to her ſufferings.

The people below ſat till a late hour. She liſtened often to their diſtant voices, as they were diſtinguiſhable in the pauſes of the ſurge, that broke loud and hollow on the ſhore; and every time the creaking hinges of their room door moved, apprehended they were coming to her. At length it appeared they had left the apartment, or had fallen aſleep there, for a profound ſtillneſs reigned whenever the murmur of the waves ſunk. Doubt did not long deceive he, for, while ſhe yet liſtened, ſhe diſtinguiſhed footſteps aſcending to the corridor. She heard them approach her chamber, and ſtop at the door; ſhe heard, alſo, the low whiſperings of their voices, as they ſeemed conſulting on what was to be done, and ſhe ſcarcely ventured to draw breath, while ſhe intenſely attended to them. Not a word, however, diſtinctly reached her, till, as one of them was departing, another called out in a half-whiſper, "It is below on the table, in my girdle; make haſte." The man came back, and ſaid ſomething in a lower voice, to which the other replied, "ſhe ſleeps," or Ellena was deceived by the hiſſing conſonants of ſome other words. He then deſcended the ſtairs; and in a few minutes ſhe perceived his comrade

alſo

alſo paſs away from the door; ſhe liſtened to his retreating ſteps, till the roaring of the ſea was alone heard in their ſtead.

Ellena's terrors were relieved only for a moment. Conſidering the import of the words, it appeared that the man who had deſcended, was gone for the ſtiletto of the other, ſuch an inſtrument being uſually worn in the girdle, and from the aſſurance, "ſhe ſleeps," he ſeemed to fear that his words had been overheard; and ſhe liſtened again for their ſteps; but they came no more.

Happily for Ellena's peace, ſhe knew not that her chamber had a door, ſo contrived as to open without ſound, by which aſſaſſins might enter unſuſpectedly at any hour of the night. Believing that the inhabitants of this houſe had now retired to reſt, her hopes and her ſpirits began to revive; but ſhe was yet ſleepleſs and watchful. She meaſured the chamber with unequal ſteps, often ſtarting as the old boards ſhook and groaned where ſhe paſſed; and often pauſing to liſten whether all was yet ſtill in the corridor. The gleam which a riſing moon threw between the bars of her window now began to ſhew many ſhadowy objects in the chamber, which ſhe did not recollect to have obſerved while the lamp was there. More than once, ſhe fancied ſhe ſaw ſomething glide along towards the place where the mattreſs was laid, and, almoſt congealed with terror, ſhe ſtood ſtill to watch it; but the illuſion, if ſuch it was, diſappeared where the moon-light faded, and even her fears could not give ſhape to it beyond. Had ſhe not known that her chamber-door remained ſtrongly barred, ſhe would have believed this was an aſſaſſin ſtealing to the bed where it might be ſuppoſed

poſed ſhe ſlept. Even now the thought occurred to her, and, vague as it was, had power to ſtrike an anguiſh, almoſt deadly, through her heart, while ſhe conſidered that her immediate ſituation was nearly as perilous as the one ſhe had imaged. Again ſhe liſtened, and ſcarcely dared to breathe; but not the lighteſt ſound occurred in the pauſes of the waves, and ſhe believed herſelf convinced that no perſon except herſelf was in the room. That ſhe was deceived in this belief, appeared from her unwillingneſs to approach the mattreſs, while it was yet involved in ſhade. Unable to overcome her reluctance, ſhe took her ſtation at the window, till the ſtrengthening rays ſhould allow a clearer view of the chamber, and in ſome degree reſtore her confidence; and ſhe watched the ſcene without as it gradually became viſible. The moon, riſing over the ocean, ſhewed its reſtleſs ſurface ſpreading to the wide horizon; and the waves, which broke in foam upon the rocky beach below, retiring in long white lines far upon the waters. She liſtened to their meaſured and ſolemn ſound, and, ſomewhat ſoothed by the ſolitary grandeur of the view, remained at the lattice till the moon had riſen high into the heavens; and even till morning began to dawn upon the ſea, and purple the eaſtern clouds.

Re-aſſured by the light that now pervaded her room, ſhe returned to the mattreſs; where anxiety at length yielded to her wearineſs, and ſhe obtained a ſhort repoſe.

CHAP. III.

" And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll ſo. - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - - -
Alas! why gnaw you ſo your nether lip?
Some bloody paſſion ſhakes your very frame:
Theſe are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me." SHAKESPEARE.

ELLENA was awakened from profound ſleep, by a loud noiſe at the door of her chamber; when, ſtarting from her mattreſs, ſhe looked around her with ſurpriſe and diſmay, as imperfect recollections of the paſt began to gather on her mind. She diſtinguiſhed the undrawing of iron bars, and then the countenance of Spalatro at her door, before ſhe had a clear remembrance of her ſituation—that ſhe was a priſoner in a houſe on a lonely ſhore, and that this man was her jailor. Such ſickneſs of the heart returned with theſe convictions, ſuch faintneſs and terror, that unable to ſupport her trembling frame, ſhe ſunk again upon the mattreſs, without demanding the reaſon of this abrupt intruſion.

"I have brought you ſome breakfaſt," ſaid Spalatro, "if you are awake to take it; but you ſeem to be aſleep yet. Surely you have had ſleep ſufficient for one night; you went to reſt ſoon enough."

Ellena made no reply, but, deeply affected with a ſenſe of her ſituation, looked with beſeeching eyes at the man, who advanced, holding forth an oaten cake and a baſon of milk. "Where ſhall I ſet them?" ſaid he, "you muſt

muſt needs be glad of them, ſince you had no ſupper."

Ellena thanked him, and deſired he would place them on the floor, for there was neither table nor chair in the room. As he did this, ſhe was ſtruck with the expreſſion of his countenance, which exhibited a ſtrange mixture of archneſs and malignity. He ſeemed congratulating himſelf upon his ingenuity, and anticipating ſome occaſion of triumph; and ſhe was ſo much intereſted, that her obſervation never quitted him while he remained in the room. As his eyes accidentally met her's, he turned them away, with the abruptneſs of a perſon who is conſcious of evil intentions, and fears leſt they ſhould be detected; nor once looked up till he haſtily left the chamber, when ſhe heard the door ſecured as formerly.

The impreſſion, which his look had left on her mind, ſo wholly engaged her in conjecture, that a conſiderable time elapſed before ſhe remembered that he had brought the refreſhment ſhe ſo much required; but, as ſhe now lifted it to her lips, a horrible ſuſpicion arreſted her hand; it was not however, before ſhe had ſwallowed a ſmall quantity of the milk. The look of Spalatro, which occaſioned her ſurpriſe, had accompanied the ſetting down of the breakfaſt, and it occurred to her, that poiſon was infuſed in this liquid. She was thus compelled to refuſe the ſuſtenance, which was become neceſſary to her, for ſhe feared to taſte even of the oaten cake, ſince Spalatro had offered it, but the little milk ſhe had unwarily taken, was ſo very ſmall that ſhe had no apprehenſion concerning it.

The day, however, was paſſed in terror, and almoſt in deſpondency; ſhe could neither doubt the

the purpoſe, for which ſhe had been brought hither, nor diſcover any poſſibility of eſcaping from her perſecutors; yet that propenſity to hope, which buoys up the human heart, even in the ſevereſt hours of trial, ſuſtained, in ſome degree, her fainting ſpirits.

During theſe miſerable hours of ſolitude and ſuſpenſe, the only alleviation to her ſuffering aroſe from a belief, that Vivaldi was ſafe, at leaſt from danger, though not from grief; but ſhe now underſtood too much of the dexterous contrivances of the Marcheſa, his mother, to think it was practicable for him to eſcape from her deſigns, and again reſtore her to liberty.

All day Ellena either leaned againſt the bars of her window, loſt in reverie, while her unconſcious eyes were fixed upon the ocean, whoſe murmurs ſhe no longer heard; or ſhe liſtened for ſome ſound from within the houſe, that might aſſiſt her conjectures, as to the number of perſons below, or what might be paſſing there. The houſe, however, was profoundly ſtill, except when now and then a footſtep ſauntered along a diſtant paſſage, or a door was heard to cloſe; but not the hum of a ſingle voice aroſe from the lower rooms, nor any ſymptom of there being more than one perſon, beſide herſelf, in the dwelling. Though ſhe had not heard her former guards depart, it appeared certain that they were gone, and that ſhe was left alone in this place with Spalatro. What could be the purport of ſuch a proceeding, Ellena could not imagine; if her death was deſigned, it ſeemed ſtrange that one perſon only ſhould be left to the hazard of the deed, when three muſt have rendered the completion of it certain. But this ſurpriſe vaniſhed, when her ſuſpicion

of

of poiſon returned; for it was probable, that theſe men had believed their ſcheme to be already nearly accompliſhed, and had abandoned her to die alone, in a chamber from whence eſcape was impracticable, leaving Spalatro to diſpoſe of her remains. All the incongruities ſhe had ſeparately obſerved in their conduct, ſeemed now to harmonize and unite in one plan; and her death, deſigned by poiſon, and that poiſon to be conveyed in the diſguiſe of nouriſhment, appeared to have been the object of it. Whether it was that the ſtrength of this conviction affected her fancy, or that the cauſe was real, Ellena, remembering at this moment that ſhe had taſted the milk, was ſeized with an univerſal ſhuddering, and thought ſhe felt that the poiſon had been ſufficiently potent to affect her, even in the inconſiderable quantity ſhe might have taken.

While ſhe was thus agitated, ſhe diſtinguiſhed footſteps loitering near her door, and attentively liſtening, became convinced, that ſome perſon was in the corridor. The ſteps moved ſoftly, ſometimes ſtopping for an inſtant, as if to allow time for liſtening, and ſoon after paſſed away.

"It is Spalatro!" ſaid Ellena; "he believes that I have taken the poiſon, and he comes to liſten for my dying groans! Alas! he is only come ſomewhat too ſoon, perhaps!"

As this horrible ſuppoſition occurred, the ſhuddering returned with encreaſed violence, and ſhe ſunk almoſt fainting, on the mattraſs; but the fit was not of long continuance. When it gradually left her, and recollection revived, ſhe perceived, however, the prudence of ſuffering Spalatro to ſuppoſe ſhe had taken the beverage he brought her, ſince ſuch belief would at leaſt

leaſt procure ſome delay of further ſchemes, and every delay afforded ſome poſſibility for hope to reſt upon. Ellena therefore, poured through the bars of her window, the milk, which ſhe believed Spalatro had deſigned ſhould be fatal in its conſequence.

It was evening, when ſhe again fancied footſteps were lingering near her door, and the ſuſpicion was confirmed, when, on turning her eyes, ſhe perceived a ſhade on the floor, underneath it, as of ſome perſon ſtationed without. Preſently the ſhadow glided away, and at the ſame time ſhe diſtinguiſhed departing ſteps treading cautiouſly.

"It is he!" ſaid Ellena; "he ſtill liſtens for my moans!"

This further confirmation of his deſigns affected her nearly as much as the firſt; when anxiouſly turning her looks towards the corridor, the ſhadow again appeared beneath the door, but ſhe heard no ſtep. Ellena now watched it with intenſe ſolicitude and expectation: fearing every inſtant that Spalatro would conclude her doubts by entering the room. "And O! when he diſcovers that I live," thought ſhe, "what may I not expect during the firſt moments of his diſappointment! what leſs than immediate death!"

The ſhadow, after remaining a few minutes ſtationary, moved a little, and then glided away as before. But it quickly returned, and a low ſound followed, as of ſome perſon endeavouring to unfaſten bolts without noiſe. Ellena heard one bar gently undrawn, and then another; ſhe obſerved the door begin to move, and then to give way, till it gradually unclоſed, and the face of Spalatro preſented itſelf from behind it. Without immediately entering, he threw a glance

glance round the chamber, as if he wiſhed to aſcertain ſome circumſtance before he ventured further. His look was more than uſually haggard as it reſted upon Ellena, who apparently repoſed on her mattraſs.

Having gazed at her for an inſtant, he ventured towards the bed with quick and unequal ſteps; his countenance expreſſed at once impatience, alarm, and the conſciouſneſs of guilt. When he was within a few paces, Ellena raiſed herſelf, and he ſtarted back as if a ſudden ſpectre had croſſed him. The more than uſual wildneſs and wanneſs of his looks, with the whole of his conduct, ſeemed to confirm all her former terrors; and when he roughly aſked her how ſhe did, Ellena had not ſufficient preſence of mind to anſwer that ſhe was ill. For ſome moments he regarded her with an earneſt and ſullen attention, and then a ſly glance of ſcrutiny, which he threw round the chamber, told her that he was enquiring whether ſhe had taken the poiſon. On perceiving that the baſon was empty, he lifted it from the floor, and Ellena fancied a gleam of ſatisfaction paſſed over his viſage.

"You have had no dinner," ſaid he, "I forgot you; but ſupper will ſoon be ready; and you may walk up the beach till then, if you will."

Ellena, extremely ſurpriſed and perplexed by this offer of a ſeeming indulgence, knew not whether to accept or reject it. She ſuſpected that ſome treachery lurked within it. The invitation appeared to be only a ſtratagem to lure her to deſtruction, and ſhe determined to decline accepting it; when again ſhe conſidered, that to accompliſh this it was not neceſſary to withdraw her from the chamber, where ſhe

was

was already ſufficiently in the power of her perſecutors. Her ſituation could not be more deſperate than it was at preſent, and almoſt any change might make it leſs ſo.

As ſhe deſcended from the corridor, and paſſed through the lower part of the houſe, no perſon appeared but her conductor; and ſhe ventured to enquire, whether the men who had brought her hither were departed. Spalatro did not return an anſwer, but led the way in ſilence to the court, and, having paſſed the gates, he pointed toward the weſt, and ſaid ſhe might walk that way.

Ellena bent her courſe towards the "many-ſounding waves," followed at a ſhort diſtance by Spalatro, and, wrapt in thought, purſued the windings of the ſhore, ſcarcely noticing the objects around her; till, on paſſing the foot of a rock, ſhe lifted her eyes to the ſcene that unfolded beyond, and obſerved ſome huts ſcattered at a conſiderable diſtance, apparently the reſidence of fiſhermen. She could juſt diſtinguiſh the dark ſails of ſome ſkiffs turning the cliffs, and entering the little bay, where the hamlet margined the beach; but, though ſhe ſaw the ſails lowered, as the boats approached the ſhore, they were too far off to allow the figures of the men to appear. To Ellena, who had believed that no human habitation, except her priſon, interrupted the vaſt ſolitudes of theſe foreſts and ſhores, the view of the huts, remote as they were, imparted a feeble hope, and even ſomewhat of joy. She looked back, to obſerve whether Spalatro was near; he was already within a few paces; and, caſting a wiſtful glance forward to the remote cottages, her heart ſunk again.

It was a lowering evening, and the ſea was dark and ſwelling; the ſcreams of the ſea-birds too,

as they wheeled among the clouds, and ſought their high neſts in the rocks, ſeemed to indicate an approaching ſtorm. Ellena was not ſo wholly engaged by ſelfiſh ſufferings, but that ſhe could ſympathiſe with thoſe of others, and ſhe rejoiced that the fiſhermen, whoſe boats ſhe had obſerved, had eſcaped the threatening tempeſt, and were ſafely ſheltered in their little homes, where, as they heard the loud waves break along the coaſt, they could look with keener pleaſure upon the ſocial circle, and the warm comforts around them. From ſuch conſiderations however, ſhe returned again to a ſenſe of her own forlorn and friendleſs ſituation.

"Alas!" ſaid ſhe, "I have no longer a home, a circle to ſmile welcomes upon me! I have no longer even one friend to ſupport, to reſcue me! I——a miſerable wanderer on a diſtant ſhore! tracked, perhaps, by the footſteps of the aſſaſſin, who at this inſtant eyes his victim with ſilent watchfulneſs, and awaits the moment of opportunity to ſacrifice her!"

Ellena ſhuddered as ſhe ſaid this, and turned again to obſerve whether Spalatro was near. He was not within view; and, while ſhe wondered, and congratulated herſelf on a poſſibility of eſcaping, ſhe perceived a Monk walking ſilently beneath the dark rocks that overbrowed the beach. His black garments were folded round him; his face was inclined towards the ground, and he had the air of a man in deep meditation.

"His, no doubt, are worthy muſings!" ſaid Ellena, as ſhe obſerved him, with mingled hope and ſurpriſe. "I may addreſs myſelf, without fear, to one of his order. It is probably as much his wiſh, as it is his duty, to ſuccour the unfortunate. Who could have hoped to find on this ſe-

queſtered

queſtered ſhore ſo ſacred a protector! his convent cannot be far off!"

He approached, his face ſtill bent towards the ground, and Ellena advanced ſlowly, and with trembling ſteps, to meet him. As he drew near, he viewed her aſkance, without lifting his head; but ſhe perceived his large eyes looking from under the ſhade of his cowl, and the upper part of his peculiar countenance. Her confidence in his protection began to fail, and ſhe faultered, unable to ſpeak, and ſcarcely daring to meet his eyes. The Monk ſtalked paſt her in ſilence, the lower part of his viſage ſtill muffled in his drapery, and as he paſſed her looked neither with curioſity, nor ſurpriſe.

Ellena pauſed, and determined, when he ſhould be at ſome diſtance, to endeavour to make her way to the hamlet, and throw herſelf upon the humanity of it's inhabitants, rather than ſolicit the pity of this forbidding ſtranger. But in the next moment ſhe heard a ſtep behind her, and, on turning, ſaw the Monk again approaching. He ſtalked by as before, ſurveying her, however, with a ſly and ſcrutinizing glance from the corners of his eyes. His air and countenance were equally repulſive, and ſtill Ellena could not ſummon courage enough to attempt engaging his compaſſion; but ſhrunk as from an enemy. There was ſomething alſo terrific in the ſilent ſtalk of ſo gigantic a form; it announced both power and treachery. He paſſed ſlowly on to ſome diſtance, and diſappeared among the rocks.

Ellena turned once more with an intention of haſtening towards the diſtant hamlet, before Spalatro ſhould obſerve her, whoſe ſtrange abſence ſhe had ſcarcely time to wonder at; but ſhe had not proceeded far, when ſuddenly ſhe perceived the

the Monk again at her ſhoulder. She ſtarted, and almoſt ſhrieked ; while he regarded her with more attention than before. He pauſed a moment, and ſeemed to heſitate ; after which he again paſſed on in ſilence. The diſtreſs of Ellena encreaſed ; he was gone the way ſhe had deſigned to run, and ſhe feared almoſt equally to follow him, and to return to her priſon. Preſently he turned, and paſſed her again, and Ellena haſtened forward. But, when fearful of being purſued, ſhe again looked back, ſhe obſerved him converſing with Spalatro. They appeared to be in conſultation, while they ſlowly advanced, till, probably obſerving her rapid progreſs, Spalatro called on her to ſtop, in a voice that echoed among all the rocks. It was a voice, which would not be diſobeyed. She looked hopeleſsly at the ſtill diſtant cottages, and ſlackened her ſteps. Preſently the Monk again paſſed before her, and Spalatro had again diſappeared. The frown, with which the former now regarded Ellena, was ſo terrific, that ſhe ſhrunk trembling back, though ſhe knew him not for her perſecutor, ſince ſhe had never conſciouſly ſeen Schedoni. He was agitated, and his look became darker.

"Whither go you ?" ſaid he in a voice that was ſtifled by emotion.

"Who is it, father, that aſks the queſtion ?" ſaid Ellena, endeavouring to appear compoſed.

"Whither go you, and who are you ?" repeated the Monk more ſternly.

"I am an unhappy orphan," replied Ellena, ſighing deeply, "If you are, as your habit denotes, a friend to the charities, you will regard me with compaſſion."

Schedoni

Schedoni was ſilent, and then ſaid——"Who, and what is that you fear?"

"I fear even for my life," replied Ellena, with heſitation. She obſerved a darker ſhade paſs over his countenance. "For your life!" ſaid he, with apparent ſurpriſe, "who is there that would think it worth the taking."

Ellena was ſtruck with theſe words.

"Poor inſect!" added Schedoni, "who would cruſh thee?"

Ellena made no reply; ſhe remained with her eyes fixed in amazement upon his face. There was ſomething in his manner of pronouncing this, yet more extraordinary than in the words themſelves. Alarmed by his manner, and awed by the encreaſing gloom, and ſwelling ſurge, that broke in thunder on the beach, ſhe at length turned away, and again walked towards the hamlet which was yet very remote.

He ſoon overtook her; when rudely ſeizing her arm, and gazing earneſtly on her face, "Who is it, that you fear?" ſaid he, "ſay who!"

"That is more than I dare ſay," replied Ellena, ſcarcely able to ſuſtain herſelf.

"Hah! is it even ſo!" ſaid the Monk, with encreaſing emotion. His viſage now became ſo terrible, that Ellena ſtruggled to liberate her arm, and ſupplicated that ſhe would not detain her. He was ſilent, and ſtill gazed upon her; but his eyes, when ſhe had ceaſed to ſtruggle, aſſumed the fixt and vacant glare of a man, whoſe thoughts have retired within themſelves, and who is no longer conſcious to ſurrounding objects.

"I beſeech you to releaſe me!" repeated Ellena, "it is late, and I am far from home."

"That is true," muttered Schedoni, ſtill graſping her arm, and ſeeming to reply to his own thoughts rather than to her words,—"that is very true."

"The evening is cloſing faſt," continued Ellena, "and I ſhall be overtaken by the ſtorm."

Schedoni ſtill muſed, and then muttered—— "The ſtorm, ſay you? Why ay, let it come."

As he ſpoke, he ſuffered her arm to drop, but ſtill held it, and walked ſlowly towards the houſe. Ellena, thus compelled to accompany him, and yet more alarmed both by his looks, his incoherent anſwers, and his approach to her priſon, renewed her ſupplications and her efforts for liberty, in a voice of piercing diſtreſs, adding, "I am far from home, father; night is coming on. See how the rocks darken! I am far from home, and ſhall be waited for."

"That is falſe!" ſaid Schedoni, with emphaſis; "and you know it to be ſo."

"Alas! I do," replied Ellena, with mingled ſhame and grief, "I have no friends to wait for me!"

"What do thoſe deſerve, who deliberately utter falſehoods," continued the Monk, "who deceive, and flatter young men to their deſtruction?"

"Father!" exclaimed the aſtoniſhed Ellena.

"Who diſturb the peace of families——who trepan with wanton arts, the heirs of noble houſes——who——hah! what do ſuch deſerve?"

Overcome with aſtoniſhment and terror, Ellena remained ſilent. She now underſtood that Schedoni, ſo far from being likely to prove a protector, was an agent of her worſt, and as ſhe

ſhe had believed her only enemy; and an apprehenſion of the immediate and terrible vengeance, which ſuch an agent ſeemed willing to accompliſh, ſubdued her ſenſes; ſhe tottered, and ſunk upon the beach. The weight, which ſtrained the arm Schedoni held, called his attention to her ſituation.

As he gazed upon her helpleſs and faded form, he became agitated. He quitted it, and traverſed the beach in ſhort turns, and with haſty ſteps; came back again, and bent over it—— his heart ſeemed ſenſible to ſome touch of pity. At one moment, he ſtepped towards the ſea, and taking water in the hollows of his hands, threw it upon her face; at another, ſeeming to regret that he had done ſo, he would ſtamp with ſudden fury upon the ſhore, and walk abruptly to a diſtance. The conflict between his deſign and his conſcience was ſtrong, or, perhaps it was only between his paſſions. He, who had hitherto been inſenſible to every tender feeling, who, governed by ambition and reſentment had contributed, by his artful inſtigations, to fix the baleful reſolution of the Marcheſa di Vivaldi, and who was come to execute her purpoſe,——even he could not now look upon the innocent, the wretched Ellena, without yielding to the momentary weakneſs, as he termed it, of compaſſion.

While he was yet unable to baffle the new emotion by evil paſſions, he deſpiſed that which conquered him. "And ſhall the weakneſs of a girl," ſaid he, "ſubdue the reſolution of a man! Shall the view of her tranſient ſufferings unnerve my firm heart, and compel me to renounce the lofty plans I have ſo ardently, ſo laborioufly imagined, at the very inſtant when they are

changing into realities! Am I awake! Is one ſpark of the fire, which has ſo long ſmouldered within my boſom, and conſumed my peace, alive! Or am I tame and abject as my fortunes? hah! as my fortunes! Shall the ſpirit of my family yield for ever to circumſtances? The queſtion rouſes it, and I feel it's energy revive within me."

He ſtalked with haſty ſteps towards Ellena, as if he feared to truſt his reſolution with a ſecond pauſe. He had a dagger concealed beneath his Monk's habit; as he had alſo an aſſaſſin's heart ſhrouded by his garments. He had a dagger——but he heſitated to uſe it; the blood which it might ſpill, would be obſerved by the peaſants of the neighbouring hamlet, and might lead to a diſcovery. It would be ſafer, he conſidered, and eaſier, to lay Ellena, ſenſeleſs as ſhe was, in the waves; their coldneſs would recall her to life, only at the moment before they would ſuffocate her.

As he ſtooped to lift her, his reſolution faultered again, on beholding her innocent face, and in that moment ſhe moved. He ſtarted back, as if ſhe could have known his purpoſe, and, knowing it, could have avenged herſelf. The water, which he had thrown upon her face, had gradually revived her; ſhe uncloſed her eyes, and, on perceiving him, ſhrieked, and attempted to riſe. His reſolution was ſubdued, ſo tremblingly fearful is guilt in the moment when it would execute it's atrocities. Overcome with apprehenſions, yet agitated with ſhame and indignation againſt himſelf for being ſo, he gazed at her for an inſtant in ſilence, and then abruptly turned away his eyes and left her. Ellena liſtened to his departing ſteps, and, raiſ-

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ing herſelf, obſerved him retiring among the rocks that led towards the houſe. Aſtoniſhed at his conduct, and ſurpriſed to find that ſhe was alone, Ellena renewed all her efforts to ſuſtain herſelf, till ſhe ſhould reach the hamlet ſo long the object of her hopes; but ſhe had proceeded only a few paces, when Spalatro again appeared ſwiftly approaching. Her utmoſt exertion availed her nothing; her feeble ſteps were ſoon overtaken, and Ellena perceived herſelf again his priſoner. The look with which ſhe reſigned herſelf, awakened no pity in Spalatro, who uttered ſome taunting jeſt upon the ſwiftneſs of her flight, as he led her back to her priſon, and proceeded in ſullen watchfulneſs. Once again, then, ſhe entered the gloomy walls of that fatal manſion, never more, ſhe now believed, to quit them with life, a belief, which was ſtrengthened when ſhe remembered that the Monk, on leaving her, had taken the way hither; for though ſhe knew not how to account for his late forbearance, ſhe could not ſuppoſe that he would long be merciful. He appeared no more, however, as ſhe paſſed to her chamber, where Spalatro left her again to ſolitude and terror, and ſhe heard that fateful door again barred upon her. When his retreating ſteps had ceaſed to ſound, a ſtilneſs, as of the grave, prevailed in the houſe; like the dead calm, which ſometimes precedes the horrors of a tempeſt.

CHAP. IV.

"I am ſettled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat."

SHAKESPEARE.

SCHEDONI had returned from the beach to the houſe, in a ſtate of perturbation, that defied the controul of even his own ſtern will. On the way thither he met Spalatro, whom, as he diſpatched him to Ellena, he ſtrictly commanded not to approach his chamber till he ſhould be ſummoned.

Having reached his apartment, he ſecured the door, though not any perſon, except himſelf, was in the houſe, nor any one expected, but thoſe who he knew would not dare to intrude upon him. Had it been poſſible to have ſhut out all conſciouſneſs of himſelf, alſo, how willingly would he have done ſo! He threw himſelf into a chair, and remained for a conſiderable time motionleſs and loſt in thought, yet the emotions of his mind were violent and contradictory. At the very inſtant when his heart reproached him with the crime he had meditated, he regretted the ambitious views he muſt relinquiſh if he failed to perpetrate it, and regarded himſelf with ſome degree of contempt for having hitherto heſitated on the ſubject. He conſidered the character of his own mind with aſtoniſhment, for circumſtances had drawn forth traits, of which, till now, he had no ſuſpicion. He knew not by what doctrine to explain the inconſiſtencies, the contradictions, he experienced, and, perhaps, it was not one of the leaſt that in

theſe moments of direful and conflicting paſſions, his reaſon could ſtill look down upon their operations, and lead him to a cool, though brief examination of his own nature. But the ſubtlety of ſelf-love ſtill eluded his enquiries, and he did not detect that pride was even at this inſtant of ſelf-examination, and of critical import, the maſter-ſpring of his mind. In the earlieſt dawn of his character this paſſion had diſplayed its predominancy, whenever occaſion permitted, and it's influence had led to ſome of the chief events of his life.

The Count di Marinella, for ſuch had formerly been the title of the Confeſſor, was the younger ſon of an ancient family, who reſided in the duchy of Milan, and near the feet of the Tyrolean Alps, on ſuch eſtates of their anceſtors, as the Italian wars of a former century had left them. The portion, which he had received at the death of his father, was not large, and Schedoni was not of a diſpoſition to improve his patrimony by ſlow diligence, or to ſubmit to the reſtraint and humiliation, which his narrow finances would have impoſed. He diſdained to acknowledge an inferiority of fortune to thoſe, with whom he conſidered himſelf equal in rank; and, as he was deſtitute of generous feeling, and of ſound judgment, he had not that loftineſs of ſoul, which is ambitious of true grandeur. On the contrary, he was ſatisfied, with an oſtentatious diſplay of pleaſurs and of power, and, thoughtleſs of the conſequence of diſſipation, was contented with the pleaſures of the moment, till his exhauſted reſources compelled him to pauſe, and to reflect. He perceived too late for his advantage, that it was neceſſary for him to diſpoſe of part of his eſtate, and to confine himſelf to the income of the remainder. Incapa-

ble of ſubmitting with grace to the reduction, which his folly had rendered expedient, he endeavoured to obtain by cunning, the luxuries that his prudence had failed to keep, and which neither his genius or his integrity could command. He withdrew, however, from the eyes of his neighbours, unwilling to ſubmit his altered circumſtances to their obſervation.

Concerning ſeveral years of his life, from this period, nothing was generally known; and, when he was next diſcovered, it was in the Spirito Santo convent at Naples, in the habit of a Monk, and under the aſſumed name of Schedoni. His air and countenance were as much altered as his way of life; his looks had become gloomy and ſevere, and the pride, which had mingled with the gaiety of their former expreſſion, occaſionally diſcovered itſelf under the diſguiſe of humility, but more frequently in the auſterity of ſilence, and in the barbarity of penance.

The perſon who diſcovered Schedoni, would not have recollected him, had not his remarkable eyes firſt fixed his attention, and then revived remembrance. As he examined his features, he traced the faint reſemblance of what Marinella had been, to whom he made himſelf known.

The Confeſſor affected to have forgotten his former acquaintance, and aſſured him, that he was miſtaken reſpecting himſelf, till the ſtranger ſo cloſely urged ſome circumſtances, that the former was no longer permitted to diſſemble. He retired, in ſome emotion, with the ſtranger, and, whatever might be the ſubject of their conference, he drew from him, before he quitted the convent, a tremendous vow, to keep ſecret from the brotherhood his knowledge of Schedoni's family, and never to reveal without thoſe walls, that he had ſeen him. Theſe requeſts he had urged

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in a manner, that at once ſurpriſed and awed the ſtranger, and which at the ſame time that it manifeſted the weight of Schedoni's fears, bade the former tremble for the conſequences of diſobedience; and he ſhuddered even while he promiſed to obey. Of the firſt part of the promiſe he was probably ſtrictly obſervant; whether he was equally ſo of the ſecond, does not appear; it is certain, that after this period, he was never more ſeen or heard of at Naples.

Schedoni, ever ambitious of diſtinction, adapted his manners to the views and prejudices of the ſociety with whom he reſided, and became one of the moſt exact obſervers of their outward forms, and almoſt a prodigy for ſelf-denial and ſevere diſcipline. He was pointed out by the fathers of the convent to the juniors as a great example, who was, however, rather to be looked up to with reverential admiration, than with an hope of emulating his ſublime virtues. But with ſuch panegyrics their friendſhip for Schedoni concluded. They found it convenient to applaud the auſterities, which they declined to practiſe; it procured them a character for ſanctity, and ſaved them the neceſſity of earning it by mortifications of their own, but they both feared and hated Schedoni for his pride and his gloomy auſterities, too much, to gratify his ambition by any thing further than empty praiſe. He had been ſeveral years in the ſociety, without obtaining any conſiderable advancement, and with the mortification of ſeeing perſons, who had never emulated his ſeverity, raiſed to high offices in the church. Somewhat too late he diſcovered, that he was not to expect any ſubſtantial favour from the brotherhood, and then it was that his reſtleſs and diſappointed ſpirit firſt ſought preferment by other avenues. He had

been ſome years Confeſſor to the Marcheſa di Vivaldi, when the conduct of her ſon awakened his hopes, by ſhowing him, that he might render himſelf not only uſeful but neceſſary to her, by his councils. It was his cuſtom to ſtudy the characters of thoſe around him, with a view of adapting them to his purpoſes, and, having aſcertained that of the Marcheſa, theſe hopes were encouraged. He perceived that her paſſions were ſtrong, her judgment weak; and he underſtood, that, if circumſtances ſhould ever enable him to be ſerviceable in promoting the end at which any one of thoſe paſſions might aim, his fortune would be eſtabliſhed.

At length, he ſo completely inſinuated himſelf into her confidence, and became ſo neceſſary to her views, that he could demand his own terms, and this he had not failed to do, though with all the affected delicacy and fineſſe that his ſituation ſeemed to require. An office of high dignity in the church, which had long vainly excited his ambition, was promiſed him by the Marcheſa, who had ſufficient influence to obtain it; her condition was that of his preſerving the honour of her family, as ſhe delicately termed it, which ſhe was careful to make him underſtand could be ſecured only by the death of Ellena. He acknowledged, with the Marcheſa, that the death of this faſcinating young woman was the only means of preſerving that honour, ſince, if ſhe lived, they had every evil to expect from the attachment and character of Vivaldi, who would diſcover and extricate her from any place of confinement, however obſcure or difficult of acceſs, to which ſhe might be conveyed. How long and how arduouſly the Confeſſor had aimed to oblige the Marcheſa, has already appeared. The laſt ſcene was now arrived,

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and he was on the eve of committing that atrocious act, which was to ſecure the pride of her houſe, and to ſatisfy at once his ambition and his deſire of vengeance; when an emotion new and ſurpriſing to him, had arreſted his arm, and compelled his reſolution to falter. But this emotion was tranſient, it diſappeared almoſt with the object that had awakened it; and now, in the ſilence and retirement of his chamber, he had leiſure to recollect his thoughts, to review his ſchemes, to re-animate his reſolution, and to wonder again at the pity, which had almoſt won him from his purpoſe. The ruling paſſion of his nature once more reſumed it's authority, and he determined to earn the honour, which the Marcheſa had in ſtore for him.

After ſome cool, and more of tumultuous, conſideration, he reſolved that Ellena ſhould be aſſaſſinated that night, while ſhe ſlept, and afterwards conveyed through a paſſage of the houſe communicating with the ſea, into which the body might be thrown and buried, with her ſad ſtory, beneath the waves. For his own ſake, he would have avoided the danger of ſhedding blood, had this appeared eaſy; but he had too much reaſon to know ſhe had ſuſpicions of poiſon, to truſt to a ſecond attempt by ſuch means; and again his indignation roſe againſt himſelf, ſince by yielding to a momentary compaſſion, he had loſt the opportunity afforded him of throwing her unreſiſtingly into the ſurge.

Spalatro, as has already been hinted, was a former confident of the Confeſſor, who knew too truly, from experience, that he could be truſted, and had, therefore, engaged him to aſſiſt on this occaſion. To the hands of this man he conſigned the fate of the unhappy Ellena, himſelf recoiling

ing from the horrible act he had willed; and intending by such a step to involve Spalatro more deeply in the guilt, and thus more effectually to secure his secret.

The night was far advanced before Schedoni's final resolution was taken, when he summoned Spalatro to his chamber to instruct him in his office. He bolted the door, by which the man had entered, forgetting that themselves were the only persons in the house, except the poor Ellena, who, unsuspicious of what was conspiring, and her spirits worn out by the late scene, was sleeping peacefully on her mattress above. Schedoni moved softly from the door he had secured, and, beckoning Spalatro to approach, spoke in a low voice, as if he feared to be overheard. "Have you perceived any sound from her chamber lately?" said he, "Does she sleep, think you?"

"No one has moved there for this hour past, at least," replied Spalatro, "I have been watching in the corridor, till you called, and should have heard if she had stirred, the old floor shakes so with every step."

"Then hear me, Spalatro," said the Confessor. "I have tried, and found thee faithful, or I should not trust thee in a business of confidence like this. Recollect all I said to thee in the morning, and be resolute and dexterous, as I have ever found thee."

Spalatro listened in gloomy attention, and the Monk proceeded, "It is late; go, therefore, to her chamber; be certain that she sleeps. Take this," he added, "and this," giving him a dagger and a large cloak——"You know how you are to use them."

He paused, and fixed his penetrating eyes on Spalatro, who held up the dagger in silence, examined

examined the blade, and continued to gaze upon it, with a vacant ſtare, as if he was unconſcious of what he did.

" You know your buſineſs," repeated Schedoni, authoritatively, " diſpatch! time wears; and I muſt ſet off early."

The man made no reply.

" The morning dawns already," ſaid the Confeſſor, ſtill more urgently, " Do you faulter? do you tremble? Do I not know you?"

Spalatro put up the poinard in his boſom without ſpeaking, threw the cloak over his arm, and moved with a loitering ſtep towards the door.

" Diſpatch!" repeated the Confeſſor, " why do you linger?"

" I cannot ſay I like this buſineſs, Signor," ſaid Spalatro ſurlily. " I know not why I ſhould always do the moſt, and be paid the leaſt."

" Sordid villain!" exclaimed Schedoni, " you are not ſatisfied then!

" No more a villain than yourſelf, Signor," retorted the man, throwing down the cloak, " I only do your buſineſs; and 'tis you that are forbid, for you would take all the reward, and I would only have a poor man have his dues. Do the work yourſelf, or give me the greater profit."

" Peace!" ſaid Schedoni, " dare no more to inſult me with the mention of reward. Do you imagine I have ſold myſelf! 'Tis my will that ſhe dies; this is ſufficient; and for you—the price you have aſked has been granted."

" It is too little," replied Spalatro, " and beſides, I do not like the work. What harm has ſhe done me?"

" Since when is it, that you have taken upon you to moralize?" ſaid the Confeſſor, " and how long

long are theſe cowardly ſcruples to laſt? This is not the firſt time you have been employed; what harm had others done you! You forget that I know you, you forget the paſt."

"No, Signor, I remember it too well, I wiſh I could forget; I remember it too well.—I have never been at peace ſince. The bloody hand is always before me! and often of a night, when the ſea roars, and ſtorms ſhake the houſe, *they* have come, all gaſhed as I left them, and ſtood before my bed! I have got up, and ran out upon the ſhore for ſafety!"

"Peace!" repeated the Confeſſor, "where is this frenzy of fear to end? To what are theſe viſions, painted in blood, to lead? I thought I was talking with a man, but find I am ſpeaking only to a baby, poſſeſſed with his nurſe's dreams! Yet I underſtand you,——you ſhall be ſatisfied."

Schedoni, however, had for once miſunderſtood this man, when he could not believe it poſſible that he was really averſe to execute what he had undertaken. Whether the innocence and beauty of Ellena had ſoftened his heart, or that his conſcience did torture him for his paſt deeds, he perſiſted in refuſing to murder her. His conſcience, or his pity, was of a very peculiar kind however; for, though he refuſed to execute the deed himſelf, he conſented to wait at the foot of a back-ſtair-caſe, that communicated with Ellena's chamber, while Schedoni accompliſhed it, and afterward to aſſiſt in carrying the body to the ſhore. "This is a compromiſe between conſcience and guilt, worthy of a demon," muttered Schedoni, who appeared to be inſenſible that he had made the ſame compromiſe with himſelf not an hour before; and whoſe extreme reluctance at this moment,

ment, to perpetrate with his own hand, what he had willingly deſigned for another, ought to have reminded him of that compromiſe.

Spalatro, releaſed from the immediate office of an executioner, endured ſilently the abuſive, yet half-ſtifled, indignation of the Confeſſor, who alſo bade him remember, that, though he now ſhrunk from the moſt active part of this tranſaction, he had not always been reſtrained, in offices of the ſame nature, by equal compunction; and that not only his means of ſubſiſtence, but his very life itſelf, was at his mercy. Spalatro readily acknowledged that it was ſo; and Schedoni knew, too well, the truth of what he had urged, to be reſtrained from his purpoſe, by any apprehenſion of the conſequence of a diſcovery from this ruffian.

"Give me the dagger, then," ſaid the Confeſſor, after a long pauſe, "take up the cloak, and follow to the ſtair-caſe. Let me ſee, whether your valour will carry you thus far."

Spalatro reſigned the ſtiletto, and threw the cloak again over his arm. The Confeſſor ſtepped to the door, and, trying to open it, "It is faſtened!" ſaid he in alarm, "ſome perſon has got into the houſe,—it is faſtened!"

"That well may be, Signor," replied Spalatro, calmly, "for I ſaw you bolt it yourſelf, after I came into the room."

"True," ſaid Schedoni, recovering himſelf; "that is true."

He opened it, and proceeded along the ſilent paſſages, towards the private ſtaircaſe, often pauſing to liſten, and then ſtepping more lightly;—the terrific Schedoni, in this moment of meditative guilt, feared even the feeble Ellena. At the foot of the ſtair-caſe, he again ſtopped to liſten. "Do you hear any thing?" ſaid he in a whiſper.

"I hear

"I hear only the ſea," replied the man.

"Huſh! it is ſomething more!" ſaid Schedoni; "that is the murmur of voices!"

They were ſilent. After a pauſe of ſome length, "It is, perhaps, the voice of the ſpectres I told you of, Signor," ſaid Spalatro, with a ſneer. "Give me the dagger," ſaid Schedoni.

Spalatro, inſtead of obeying, now graſped the arms of the Confeſſor, who, looking at him for an explanation of this extraordinary action, was ſtill more ſurpriſed to obſerve the paleneſs and horror of his countenance. His ſtarting eyes ſeemed to follow ſome object along the paſſage, and Schedoni, who began to partake of his feelings, looked forward to diſcover what occaſioned this diſmay, but could not perceive any thing that juſtified it. "What is it you fear?" ſaid he at length.

Spalatro's eyes were ſtill moving in horror, "Do you ſee nothing!" ſaid he pointing. Schedoni looked again, but did not diſtinguiſh any object in the remote gloom of the paſſage, whither Spalatro's ſight was now fixed.

"Come, come," ſaid he, aſhamed of his own weakneſs, "this is not a moment for ſuch fancies. Awake from this idle dream."

Spalatro withdrew his eyes, but they retained all their wildneſs. "It was no dream," ſaid he, in the voice of a man who is exhauſted by pain, and begins to breathe ſomewhat more freely again. "I ſaw it as plainly as I now ſee you."

"Dotard! what did you ſee!" enquired the Confeſſor.

"It came before my eyes in a moment, and ſhewed itſelf diſtinctly and outſpread."

"What

" What ſhewed itſelf ?" repeated Schedoni."

" And then it beckoned—yes, it beckoned me, with that blood-ſtained finger ! and glided away - down the paſſage, ſtill beckoning—— till it was loſt in the darkneſs."

" This is very frenzy !" ſaid Schedoni, exceſſively agitated. " Arouſe yourſelf, and be a man !"

" Frenzy ! would it were, Signior. I ſaw ſaw that dreadful hand—I ſee it now—it is there again !—there !"

Schedoni, ſhocked, embarraſſed, and once more infected with the ſtrange emotions of Spalatro, looked forward expecting to diſcover ſome terrific object, but ſtill nothing was viſible to him, and he ſoon recovered himſelf ſufficiently to endeavour to appeaſe the fancy of this conſcience-ſtruck ruffian. Bnt Spalatro was inſenſible to all he could urge, and the Confeſſor, fearing that his voice, though weak and ſtifled, would awaken Ellena, tried to withdraw him from the ſpot, to the apartment they had quitted.

" The wealth of San Loretto ſhould not make me go that way, Signior," replied he, ſhuddering—" that was the way *it* beckoned, it vaniſhed that way !"

Every emotion now yielded with Schedoni, to to that of apprehenſion leſt Ellena, being awakened, ſhould make his taſk more horrid by a ſtruggle, and his embarraſſment encreaſed at each inſtant, for neither command, menace, or entreaty could prevail with Spalatro to retire, till the Monk luckily remembered a door which opened beyond the ſtair-caſe, and would conduct them by another way to the oppoſite ſide of the houſe. The man conſented ſo to depart, when,

Schedoni

Schedoni, unlocking a ſuit of rooms, of which he had always kept the keys, they paſſed in ſilence through an extent of deſolate chambers, till they reached the one which they had lately left.

Here, relieved from apprehenſion reſpecting Ellena, the Confeſſor expoſtulated more freely with Spalatro, but neither argument nor menace could prevail, and the man perſiſted in refuſing to return to the ſtair-caſe, though proteſting, at the ſame time, that he would not remain alone in any part of the houſe; till the wine, with which the Confeſſor abundantly ſupplied him, began to overcome the terrors of his imagination. At length, his courage was ſo much re-animated, that he conſented to reſume his ſtation, and await at the foot of the ſtairs the accompliſhment of Schedoni's dreadful errand, with which agreement they returned thither by the way they had lately paſſed. The wine, with which Schedoni alſo had found it neceſſary to ſtrengthen his own reſolution, did not ſecure him from ſevere emotion, when he found himſelf again near Ellena; but he made a ſtrenuous effort for ſelf-ſubjection, as he demanded the dagger of Spalatro.

"You have it, already, Signor," replied the man.

"True," ſaid the Monk; "aſcend ſoftly, or our ſteps may awaken her."

"You ſaid I was to wait at the foot of the ſtairs, Signor, while you"——

"True, true, true!" muttered the Confeſſor, and had begun to aſcend, when his attendant deſired him to ſtop. "You are going in darkneſs, Signor, you have forgotten the lamp. I have another here."

Schedoni

Schedoni took it angrily, without ſpeaking, and was again aſcending, when he heſitated, and once more pauſed. "The glare will diſturb her," thought he, "it is better to go in darkneſs—Yet——". He conſidered, that he could not ſtrike with certainty without light to direct his hand, and he kept the lamp, but returned once more to charge Spalatro not to ſtir from the foot of the ſtairs till he called, and to aſcend to the chamber upon the firſt ſignal.

"I will obey, Signor, if you, on your part, will promiſe not to give the ſignal till all is over."

"I do promiſe," replied Schedoni. "No more!"

Again he aſcended, nor ſtopped till he reached Ellena's door, where he liſtened for a ſound; but all was as ſilent as if death already reigned in the chamber. This door was, from long diſuſe, difficult to be opened; formerly it would have yielded without ſound, but now Schedoni was fearful of noiſe from every effort he made to move it. After ſome difficulty, however, it gave way, and he perceived, by the ſtillneſs within the apartment, that he had not diſturbed Ellena. He ſhaded the lamp with the door for a moment, while he threw an enquiring glance forward, and when he did venture farther, held part of his dark drapery before the light to prevent the rays from ſpreading through the room.

As he approached the bed, her gentle breathings informed him that ſhe ſtill ſlept, and the next moment he was at her ſide. She lay in deep and peaceful ſlumber, and ſeemed to have thrown herſelf upon the mattreſs, after having been wearied by her griefs; for, though ſleep preſſed heavily on her eyes, their lids were yet wet with tears.

While

While Schedoni gazed for a moment upon her innocent countenance, a faint ſmile ſtole over it. He ſtepped back. " She ſmiles in her murderer's face!" ſaid he, ſhuddering, " I muſt be ſpeedy."

He ſearched for the dagger, and it was ſome time before his trembling hand could diſengage it from the folds of his garment; but, having done ſo, he again drew near, and prepared to ſtrike. Her dreſs perplexed him; it would interrupt the blow, and he ſtooped to examine whether he could turn her robe aſide, without waking her. As the light paſſed over her face, he perceived that the ſmile had vaniſhed—the viſions of her ſleep were changed, for tears ſtole from beneath her eye-lids, and her features ſuffered a ſlight convulſion. She ſpoke! Schedoni, apprehending that the light had diſturbed her, ſuddenly drew back, and, again irreſolute, ſhaded the lamp, and concealed himſelf behind the curtain, while he liſtened. But her words were inward and indiſtinct, and convinced him that ſhe ſtill ſlumbered.

His agitation and repugnance to ſtrike encreaſed with every moment of delay, and, as often as he prepared to plunge the poinard in her boſom, a ſhuddering horror reſtrained him. Aſtoniſhed at his own feelings, and indignant at what he termed a daſtardly weakneſs, he found it neceſſary to argue with himſelf, and his rapid thoughts ſaid, " Do I not feel the neceſſity of this act! Does not what is dearer to me than exiſtence—does not my conſequence depend on the execution of it? Is ſhe not alſo beloved by the young Vivaldi?—have I already forgotten the church of the Spirito Santo?" This conſideration reanimated him; vengeance nerved his arm, and drawin

drawing aſide the lawn from her boſom, he once more raiſed it to ſtrike; when, after gazing for an inſtant, ſome new cauſe of horror ſeemed to ſeize all his frame, and he ſtood for ſome moments aghaſt and motionleſs like a ſtatue. His reſpiration was ſhort and laborious, chilly drops ſtood on his forehead, and all his faculties of mind ſeemed ſuſpended. When he recovered he ſtooped to examine again the miniature, which had occaſioned this revolution, and which had lain concealed beneath the lawn that he withdrew. The terrible certainty was almoſt confirmed, and forgetting, in his impatience to know the truth, the imprudence of ſuddenly diſcovering himſelf to Ellena at this hour of the night, and with a dagger at his feet, he called loudly "Awake! awake! Say, what is your name? Speak! ſpeak quickly!"

Ellena, arouſed by a man's voice, ſtarted from her mattreſs, when, perceiving Schedoni, and by the pale glare of the lamp, his haggard countenance, ſhe ſhrieked, and ſunk back on the pillow. She had not fainted; and believing that he came to murder her, ſhe now exerted herſelf to plead for mercy. The energy of her feelings enabled her to riſe and throw herſelf at his feet, "Be merciful, O father! be merciful! ſaid ſhe, in a trembling voice.

"Father, interrupted Schedoni, with earneſtneſs; and then ſeeming to reſtrain himſelf, he added, with unaffected ſurpriſe, "Why are you thus terrified?" for he had loſt, in new intereſts and emotions, all conſciouſneſs of evil intention, and of the ſingularity of his ſituation. "What do you fear?" he repeated.

"Have pity, holy father!" exclaimed Ellena in agony.

"Why

" Why do you not ſay whoſe portrait that is?" demanded he, forgetting that he had not aſked the queſtion before.

" Whoſe portrait?" repeated the Confeſſor in a loud voice.

" Whoſe portrait!" ſaid Ellena, with extreme ſurpriſe.

" Ay, how came you by it? Be quick—whoſe reſemblance is it?"

" Why ſhould you wiſh to know?" ſaid Ellena.

" Anſwer my queſtion," repeated Schedoni, with encreaſing ſternneſs.

" I cannot part with it, holy father," replied Ellena, preſſing it to her boſom, " you do not wiſh me to part with it!"

" Is it impoſſible to make you anſwer my queſtion!" ſaid he, in extreme perturbation, and turning away from her, " has fear utterly confounded you!" Then, again ſtepping towards her, and ſeizing her wriſt, he repeated the demand in a tone of deſperation.

" Alas! he is dead! or I ſhould not now want a protector, replied Ellena, ſhrinking from his graſp, and weeping.

" You trifle," ſaid Schedoni, with a terrible look, " I once more demand an anſwer—whoſe picture?"——

Ellena lifted it, gazed upon it for a moment, and then preſſing it to her lips ſaid, " This was my father."

" Your father!" he repeated in an inward voice, " your father!" and ſhuddering, turned away.

Ellena looked at him with ſurpriſe. " I never knew a father's care," ſhe ſaid, nor till lately did I perceive the want of it.—But now."——

" His

"His name?" interrupted the Confeſſor.

"But now," continued Ellena——"if you are not as a father to me ——to whom can I look for protection?"

"His name," repeated Schedoni, with ſterner emphaſis.

"It is ſacred," replied Ellena, "for he was unfortunate!"

"His name?" demanded the Confeſſor, furiouſly.

"I have promiſed to conceal it, father."

"On your life, I charge you tell it; remember, on your life!"

Ellena trembled, was ſilent, and with ſupplicating looks implored him to deſiſt from enquiry, but he urged the queſtion more irreſiſtibly. "His name then," ſaid ſhe, "was Marinella."

Schedoni groaned and turned away; but in a few ſeconds, ſtruggling to command the agitation that ſhattered his whole frame, he returned to Ellena, and raiſed her from her knees, on which ſhe had thrown herſelf to implore mercy.

"The place of his reſidence?" ſaid the Monk.

"It was far from hence," ſhe replied; but he demanded an unequivocal anſwer, and ſhe reluctantly gave one.

Schedoni turned away as before, groaned heavily, and paced the chamber without ſpeaking; while Ellena in her turn, enquired the motive of his queſtions, and the occaſion of his agitation. But he ſeemed not to notice any thing ſhe ſaid, and, wholly given up to his feelings, was inflexibly ſilent, while he ſtalked, with meaſured ſteps along the room, and his face,

half

half hid by his cowl, was bent towards the ground.

Ellena's terror began to yield to aſtoniſhment, and this emotion encreaſed, when Schedoni approaching her, ſhe perceived tears ſwell in his eyes, which were fixt on her's, and his countenance ſoften from the wild diſorder that had marked it. Still he could not ſpeak. At length he yielded to the fullneſs of his heart, and Schedoni, the ſtern Schedoni, wept and ſighed! He ſeated himſelf on the mattreſs beſide Ellena, took her hand, which ſhe affrighted attempted to withdraw, and when he could command his voice, ſaid, "Unhappy child!——— behold your more unhappy father!" As he concluded, his voice was overcome by groans, and he drew the cowl entirely over his face.

"My father!" exclaimed the aſtoniſhed and doubting Ellena——"my father!" and fixed her eyes upon him. He gave no reply, but when, a moment after, he lifted his head, "Why do you reproach me with thoſe looks!" ſaid the conſcious Schedoni.

"Reproach you!—reproach my father!" repeated Ellena, in accents ſoftening into tenderneſs, *Why* ſhould I reproach my father!"

"*Why!*" exclaimed Schedoni, ſtarting from his ſeat, "Great God!"

As he moved, he ſtumbled over the dagger at his foot; at that moment it might be ſaid to ſtrike into his heart. He puſhed it haſtily from ſight. Ellena had not obſerved it; but ſhe obſerved his labouring breaſt, his diſtracted looks, and quick ſteps as he walked to and fro in the chamber; and ſhe aſked, with the moſt ſoothing accents of compaſſion, and looks of anxious gentleneſs, what made him ſo unhappy, and

tried

tried to assuage his sufferings. They seemed to encrease with every wish she expressed to dispel them; at one moment he would pause to gaze upon her, and in the next would quit her with a frenzied start.

"Why do you look so piteously upon me, father?" Ellena said, "why are you so unhappy? Tell me, that I may comfort you."

This appeal renewed all the violence of remorse and grief, and he pressed her to his bosom, and wetted her cheek with his tears. Ellena wept to see him weep, till her doubts began to take alarm. Whatever might be the proofs, that had convinced Schedoni of the relationship between them, he had not explained these to her, and, however strong was the eloquence of nature which she witnessed, it was not sufficient to justify an entire confidence in the assertion he had made, or to allow her to permit his caresses without trembling. She shrunk, and endeavoured to disengage herself; when, immediately understanding her, he said, "Can you doubt the cause of these emotions? these signs of paternal affection?"

"Have I not reason to doubt," replied Ellena, timidly, "since I never witnessed them before?"

He withdrew his arms, and fixing his eyes earnestly on hers, regarded her for some moments in expressive silence. "Poor Innocent!" said he, at length, "you know not how much your words convey!——It is too true, you never have known a father's tenderness till now!"

His countenance darkened while he spoke, and he rose again from his seat. Ellena, meanwhile, astonished, terrified and oppressed by a variety of emotions, had no power to demand his

reaſons for the belief that ſo much agitated him, or any explanation of his conduct; but ſhe appealed to the portrait, and endeavoured, by tracing ſome reſemblance between it and Schedoni, to decide her doubts. The countenance of each was as different in character as in years. The miniature diſplayed a young man rather handſome, of a gay and ſmiling countenance; yet the ſmile expreſſed triumph, rather than ſweetneſs, and his whole air and features were diſtinguiſhed by a conſciouſneſs of ſuperiority that roſe even to haughtineſs.

Schedoni, on the contrary, advanced in years, exhibited a ſevere phyſiognomy, furrowed by thought, no leſs than by time, and darkened by the habitual indulgence of moroſe paſſions. He looked as if he had never ſmiled ſince the portrait was drawn; and it ſeemed as if the painter, prophetic of Schedoni's future diſpoſition, had arreſted and embodied that ſmile, to prove hereafter that cheerfulneſs had once played upon his features.

Though the expreſſion was ſo different between the countenance, which Schedoni formerly owned, and that he now wore the ſame character of haughty pride was viſible in both; and Ellena did trace a reſemblance in the bold outline of the features, but not ſufficient to convince her, without farther evidence, that each belonged to the ſame perſon, and that the Confeſſor had ever been the young cavalier in the portrait. In the firſt tumult of her thoughts ſhe had not had leiſure to dwell upon the ſingularity of Schedoni's viſiting her at this deep hour of the night, or to urge any queſtions, except vague ones, concerning the truth of his relationſhip to him. But now, that her mind

was ſomewhat recollected, and that his looks were leſs terrific, ſhe ventured to aſk a fuller explanation of theſe circumſtances, and his reaſons for the late extraordinary aſſertion. "It is paſt midnight, father," ſaid Ellena, "you may judge then how anxious I am to learn, what motive led you to my chamber at this lonely hour?"

Schedoni made no reply.

"Did you come to warn me of danger?" ſhe continued, "had you diſcovered the cruel deſigns of Spalatro? Ah! when I ſupplicated for your compaſſion on the ſhore this evening, you little thought what perils ſurrounded me! or you would———"

"You ſay true!" interrupted he, in a hurried manner, "but name the ſubject no more. Why will you perſiſt in returning to it?"

His words ſurprized Ellena, who had not even alluded to the ſubject till now; but the returning wildneſs of his countenance, made her fearful of dwelling upon the topic, even ſo far as to point out his error.

Another deep pauſe ſucceeded, during which Schedoni continued to pace the room, ſometimes ſtopping for an inſtant, to fix his eyes on Ellena, and regarding her with an earneſtneſs that ſeemed to partake of frenzy, and then gloomily withdrawing his regards, and ſighing heavily, as he turned away to a diſtant part of the room. She, meanwhile, agitated with aſtoniſhment at his conduct, as well as at her own circumſtances, and with the fear of offending him by further queſtions, endeavoured to ſummon courage to ſolicit the explanation which was ſo important to her tranquillity. At length ſhe aſked, how ſhe might venture to believe a

circumſtance ſo ſurpriſing, as that of which he had juſt aſſured her, and to remind him that he had not yet diſcloſed his reaſon for admitting the belief.

The Confeſſor's feelings were eloquent in reply; and, when at length they were ſufficiently ſubdued, to permit him to talk coherently, he mentioned ſome circumſtances concerning Ellena's family, that proved him at leaſt to have been intimately acquainted with it; and others, which ſhe believed were known only to Bianchi and herſelf, that removed every doubt of his identity.

This, however, was a period of his life too big with remorſe, horror, and the firſt pangs of parental affection, to allow him to converſe long; deep ſolitude was neceſſary for his ſoul. He wiſhed to plunge where no eye might reſtrain his emotions, or obſerve the overflowing anguiſh of his heart. Having obtained ſufficient proof to convince him that Ellena was indeed his child, and aſſured her that ſhe ſhould be removed from this houſe on the following day, and be reſtored to her home, he abruptly left the chamber.

As he deſcended the ſtair-caſe, Spalatro ſtepped forward to meet him, with the cloak which had been deſigned to wrap the mangled form of Ellena, when it ſhould be carried to the ſhore. "Is it done?" ſaid the ruffian, in a ſtifled voice, "I am ready;" and he ſpread forth the cloak, and began to aſcend.

"Hold! villain, hold!" ſaid Schedoni, lifting up his head for the firſt time, "Dare to enter that chamber, and your life ſhall anſwer for it."

"What!" exclaimed the man, ſhrinking back aſtoniſhed—"will not *her's* ſatisfy you?"

He trembled for the conſequence of what he had ſaid, when he obſerved the changing countenance of the Confeſſor. But Schedoni ſpoke not: the tumult in his breaſt was too great for utterance, and he preſſed haſtily forward. Spalatro followed. "Be pleaſed to tell me what I am to do," ſaid he, again holding forth the cloak.

"Avaunt!" exclaimed the other, turning fiercely upon him; "leave me."

"How!" ſaid the man, whoſe ſpirit was now arouſed, "has *your* courage failed too, Signor? If ſo, I will prove myſelf no daſtard, though you called me one; I'll do the buſineſs myſelf."

"Villain! fiend!" cried Schedoni, ſeizing the ruffian by the throat, with a graſp that ſeemed intended to annihilate him; when, recollecting that the fellow was only willing to obey the very inſtructions he had himſelf but lately delivered to him, other emotions ſucceeded to that of rage; he ſlowly liberated him, and in accents broken, and ſoftening from ſternneſs, bade him retire to reſt. "To-morrow," he added, "I will ſpeak further with you. As for this night——————I have changed my purpoſe. Begone!"

Spalatro was about to expreſs the indignation, which aſtoniſhment and fear had hitherto overcome, but his employer repeated his command in a voice of thunder, and cloſed the door of his apartment with violence, as he ſhut out a man whoſe preſence was become hateful to him. He felt relieved by his abſence, and began to breathe more freely, till remembering that this accomplice had juſt boaſted that he was no daſtard, he dreaded leſt by way of proving the aſſertion, he ſhould attempt to commit the

crime, from which he had lately ſhrunk. Terrified at the poſſibility, and even apprehending that it might already have become a reality, he ruſhed from the room, and found Spalatro in the paſſage leading to the private ſtair-caſe; but, whatever might have been his purpoſe, the ſituation and looks of the latter were ſufficiently alarming. At the approach of Schedoni, he turned his ſullen and malignant countenance towards him, without anſwering the call, or the demand as to his buſineſs there; and with ſlow ſteps obeyed the order of his maſter, that he ſhould withdraw to his room. Thither Schedoni followed, and, having locked him in it for the night, he repaired to the apartment of Ellena, which he ſecured from the poſſibility of intruſion. He then returned to his own, not to ſleep, but to abandon himſelf to the agonies of remorſe and horror; and he yet ſhuddered like a man, who has juſt recoiled from the brink of a precipice, but who ſtill meaſures the gulf with his eye.

CHAP. V.

——— ——— But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whoſe ſhady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering paſſenger.
MILTON.

ELLENA, when Schedoni had left her, recollected all the particulars, which he had thought proper

proper to reveal concerning her family, and, comparing them with ſuch circumſtances as the late Bianchi had related on the ſame ſubject, ſhe perceived nothing that was contradictory between the two accounts. But ſhe knew not even yet enough of her own ſtory, to underſtand why Bianchi had been ſilent as to ſome particulars, which had juſt been diſcloſed. From Bianchi ſhe had always underſtood, that her mother had married a nobleman of the duchy of Milan, and of the houſe of Marinella; that the marriage had been unfortunate; and that ſhe herſelf, even before the death of the Counteſs, had been committed to the care of Bianchi, the only ſiſter of that lady. Of this event, or of her mother, Ellena had no remembrance; for the kindneſs of Bianchi had obliterated from her mind the loſs and the griefs of her early infancy; and ſhe recollected only the accident which had diſcovered to her, in Bianchi's cabinet, after the death of the latter, the miniature and the name of her father. When ſhe had enquired the reaſon of this injunction, Bianchi replied, that the degraded fortune of her houſe rendered privacy deſirable; and anſwered her further queſtions concerning her father, by relating, that he had died while ſhe was an infant. The picture, which Ellena had diſcovered, Bianchi had found among the trinkets of the departed Counteſs, and deſigned to preſent it at ſome future period to Ellena, when her diſcretion might be truſted with a knowledge of her family. This was the whole of what Signora Bianchi had judged it neceſſary to explain, though in her laſt hours it appeared that ſhe wiſhed to reveal more; but it was then too late.

Though Ellena perceived that many circumſtances of the relations given by Schedoni, and by

Signora Bianchi, coincided, and that none were contradictory, except that of his death, ſhe could not yet ſubdue her amazement at this diſcovery, or even the doubts which occaſionally recurred to her as to it's truth. Schedoni, on the contrary, had not even appeared ſurpriſed, when ſhe aſſured him, that ſhe always underſtood her father had been dead many years; though when ſhe aſked if her mother too was living both his diſtreſs and his aſſurances confirmed the relation made by Bianchi.

When Ellena's mind became more tranquil, ſhe noticed again the ſingularity of Schedoni's viſit to her apartment at ſo ſacred an hour; and her thoughts glanced back involuntarily to the ſcene of the preceding evening on the ſea-ſhore, and the image of her father appeared in each, in the terrific character of an agent of the Marcheſa di Vivaldi. The ſuſpicions, however, which ſhe had formerly admitted, reſpecting his deſigns, were now impatiently rejected, for ſhe was leſs anxious to diſcover truth, than to releaſe herſelf from horrible ſuppoſitions; and ſhe willingly believed that Schedoni, having miſunderſtood her character, had only deſigned to aſſiſt in removing her beyond the reach of Vivaldi. The ingenuity of hope ſuggeſted alſo, that, having juſt heard from her conductors, or from Spalatro, ſome circumſtances of her ſtory, he had been led to a ſuſpicion of the relationſhip between them, and that in the firſt impatience of parental anxiety, he had diſregarded the hour, and come, though at midnight, to her apartment to aſcertain the truth.

While ſhe ſoothed herſelf with this explanation of a circumſtance, which had occaſioned her conſiderable ſurpriſe, ſhe perceived on the floor the point of a dagger peeping from beneath the curtains!

tains! Emotions almoſt too horrible to be ſuſtained, followed this diſcovery; ſhe took the inſtrument, and gazed upon it aghaſt and trembling, for a ſuſpicion of the real motive of Schedoni's viſit glanced upon her mind. But it was only for a moment; ſuch a ſuppoſition was too terrible to be willingly endured; ſhe again believed that Spalatro alone had meditated her deſtruction, and ſhe thanked the Confeſſor as her deliverer, inſtead of ſhrinking from him as an aſſaſſin. She now underſtood that Schedoni, having diſcovered the ruffian's deſign, had ruſhed into the chamber to ſave a ſtranger from his murderous poniard, and had unconſciouſly reſcued his own daughter, when the portrait at her boſom informed him of the truth. With this conviction Ellena's eyes overflowed with gratitude, and her heart was huſhed to peace.

Schedoni, meanwhile, ſhut up in his chamber, was agitated by feelings of a very oppoſite nature. When their firſt exceſs was exhauſted, and his mind was calm enough to reflect, the images that appeared on it ſtruck him with ſolemn wonder. In purſuing Ellena at the criminal inſtigation of the Marcheſa di Vivaldi, it appeared that he had been perſecuting his own child; and in thus conſenting to conſpire againſt the innocent, he had in the event been only puniſhing the guilty, and preparing mortification for himſelf on the exact ſubject to which he had ſacrificed his conſcience. Every ſtep that he had taken with a view of gratifying his ambition was retrograde, and while he had been wickedly intent to ſerve the Marcheſa and himſelf, by preventing the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, he had been laborioufly counteracting his own fortune. An alliance with the illuſtrious houſe of Vivaldi, was above his loftieſt hope

of advancement, and this event he had himſelf nearly prevented by the very means which had been adopted, at the expence of every virtuous conſideration, to obtain an inferior promotion. Thus by a ſingular retribution, his own crimes had recoiled upon himſelf.

Schedoni perceived the many obſtacles, which lay between him and his newly awakened hopes, and that much was to be overcome before thoſe nuptials could be publicly ſolemnized, which he was now ſtill more anxious to promote, than he had lately been to prevent. The approbation of the Marcheſa was, at leaſt, deſirable, for ſhe had much at her diſpoſal, and without it, though his daughter might be the wife of Vivaldi, he himſelf would be no otherwiſe benefited at preſent than by the honour of the connection. He had ſome peculiar reaſons for believing, that her conſent might be obtained, and, though there was hazard in delaying the nuptials till ſuch an experiment had been made, he reſolved to encounter it, rather than forbear to ſolicit her concurrence. But, if the Marcheſa ſhould prove inexorable, he determined to beſtow the hand of Ellena, without her knowledge, and in doing ſo, he well knew that he incurred little danger from her reſentment, ſince he had ſecrets in his poſſeſſion, the conſciouſneſs of which muſt awe her into a ſpeedy neutrality. The conſent of the Marcheſe, as he deſpaired of obtaining it, he did not mean to ſolicit, and the influence of the Marcheſa was ſuch, that Schedoni did not regard that as eſſential.

The firſt ſteps, however, to be taken, were thoſe that might releaſe Vivaldi from the Inquiſition, the tremendous priſon into which Schedoni himſelf, little foreſeeing that he ſhould ſo ſoon wiſh for his liberation, had cauſed him to be

thrown

thrown. He had always underſtood, indeed, that if the Informer forbore to appear againſt the Accuſed in this Court, the latter would of courſe be liberated; and he alſo believed, that Vivaldi's freedom could be obtained whenever he ſhould think proper to apply to a perſon at Naples, whom he knew to be connected with the *Holy Office* of Rome. How much the Confeſſor had ſuffered his wiſhes to deceive him, may appear hereafter. His motives for having thus confined Vivaldi, were partly thoſe of ſelf-defence. He dreaded the diſcovery and the vengeance, which might follow the loſs of Ellena, ſhould Vivaldi be at liberty immediately to purſue his enquiries. But he believed that all trace of her muſt be loſt, after a few weeks had elapſed, and that Vivaldi's ſufferings from confinement in the Inquiſition would have given intereſts to his mind, which muſt weaken the one he felt for Ellena. Yet, though in this inſtance ſelf-defence had been a principal motive with Schedoni, a deſire of revenging the inſult he had received in the church of the Spirito Santo, and all the conſequent mortifications he experienced, had been a ſecond; and, ſuch was the blackneſs of this hatred, and the avarice of his revenge, that he had not conſidered the ſuffering, which the loſs of Ellena would occaſion Vivaldi, as ſufficient retaliation.

In adopting a mode of puniſhment ſo extraordinary as that of impriſonment in the Inquiſition, it appears, therefore, that Schedoni was influenced, partly by the difficulty of otherwiſe confining Vivaldi, during the period for which confinement was abſolutely neceſſary to the ſucceſs of his own ſchemes, and partly by a deſire of inflicting the tortures of terror. He had alſo been encouraged by his diſcovery of this opportunity for conferring

conferring new obligations on the Marchesa. The very conduct, that must have appeared to the first glance of an honest mind fatal to his interests, he thought might be rendered beneficial to them, and that his dexterity could so command the business, as that the Marchesa should eventually thank him as the deliverer of her son, instead of discovering and execrating him as his Accuser; a scheme favoured by the unjust and cruel rule enacted by the tribunal he approached, which permitted anonymous Informers.

To procure the arrestation of Vivaldi, it had been only necessary to send a written accusation, without a name, to the *Holy Office*, with a mention of the place where the accused person might be seized; but the suffering in consequence of this did not always proceed further than the *question*; since, if the Informer failed to discover himself to the Inquisitors, the prisoner, after many examinations, was released, unless he happened unwarily to criminate himself. Schedoni, as he did not intend to prosecute, believed, therefore, that Vivaldi would of course be discharged after a certain period, and supposing it also utterly impossible that he could ever discover his Accuser, the Confessor determined to appear anxious and active in effecting his release. This character of a deliverer, he knew he should be the better enabled to support by means of a person officially connected with the *Holy Office*, who had already unconsciously assisted his views. In the apartment of this man, Schedoni had accidentally seen a formula of arrestation against a person suspected of Heresy, the view of which had not only suggested to him the plan he had since adopted, but had in some degree assisted him to carry it into effect. He had seen the scroll only for a short time,

but

but his obſervations were ſo minute, and his memory ſo clear, that he was able to copy it with at leaſt ſufficient exactneſs to impoſe upon the Benedictine prieſt, who had, perhaps, ſeldom or never ſeen a real inſtrument of this kind. Schedoni had employed this artifice for the purpoſe of immediately ſecuring Vivaldi, apprehending that, while the Inquiſitors were ſlowly deliberating upon his arreſt, he might quit Celano, and elude diſcovery. If the deception ſucceeded, it would enable him alſo to ſeize Ellena, and to miſlead Vivaldi reſpecting her deſtination. The charge of having carried off a nun might appear to be corroborated by many circumſtances, and Schedoni would probably have made theſe the ſubject of real denunciation, had he not foreſeen the danger and the trouble in which it might implicate himſelf; and that, as the charge could not be ſubſtantiated, Ellena would finally eſcape. As far as his plan now went, it had been ſucceſsful; ſome of the bravoes whom he hired to perſonate officials, had conveyed Vivaldi to the town, where the real officers of the Inquiſition were appointed to receive him; while the others carried Ellena to the ſhore of the Adriatic. Schedoni had much applauded his own ingenuity, in thus contriving by the matter of the forged accuſation, to throw an impenetrable veil over the fate of Ellena, and to ſecure himſelf from the ſuſpicions or vengeance of Vivaldi, who, it appeared, would always believe that ſhe had died, or was ſtill confined in the unſearchable priſons of the Inquiſition.

Thus he had betrayed himſelf in endeavouring to betray Vivaldi, whoſe releaſe, however, he yet ſuppoſed could be eaſily obtained; but how much

much his policy had, in this inſtance, outrun his ſagacity, now remained to be proved.

The ſubject of Schedoni's immediate perplexity was, the difficulty of conveying Ellena back to Naples; ſince not chuſing to appear at preſent in the character of her father, he could not decorouſly accompany her thither himſelf, nor could he prudently entruſt her to the conduct of any perſon whom he knew in this neighbourhood. It was, however, neceſſary to form a ſpeedy determination, for he could neither endure to paſs another day in a ſcene which muſt continually impreſs him with the horrors of the preceding night, nor that Ellena ſhould remain in it; and the morning light already gleamed upon his caſements.

After ſome further deliberation, he reſolved to be himſelf her conductor, as far at leaſt as through the foreſts of the Garganus, and at the firſt town where conveniencies could be procured, to throw aſide his Monk's habit, and aſſuming the dreſs of a layman, accompany her in this diſguiſe towards Naples, till he ſhould either diſcover ſome ſecure means of ſending her forward to that city, or a temporary aſylum for her in a convent on the way.

His mind was ſcarcely more tranquil, after having formed this determination, than before, and he did not attempt to repoſe himſelf even for a moment. The circumſtances of the late diſcovery were almoſt perpetually recurring to his affrighted conſcience, accompanied by a fear that Ellena might ſuſpect the real purpoſe of his midnight viſit; and he alternately formed and rejected plauſible falſehoods, that might aſſuage her curioſity, and delude her apprehenſion.

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The hour arrived, however, when it was neceſſary to prepare for departure, and found him ſtill undecided as to the explanation he ſhould form.

Having releaſed Spalatro from his chamber, and given him directions to procure horſes and a guide immediately from the neighbouring hamlet, he repaired to Ellena's room, to prepare her for this haſty removal. On approaching it, a remembrance of the purpoſe, with which he had laſt paſſed through theſe ſame paſſages and ſtaircaſe, appealed ſo powerfully to his feelings, that he was unable to proceed, and he turned back to his own apartment to recover ſome command over himſelf. A few moments reſtored to him his uſual addreſs, though not his tranquillity, and he again approached the chamber; it was now, however, by way of the corridor. As he unbarred the door, his hand trembled; but, when he entered the room, his countenance and manner had reſumed their uſual ſolemnity, and his voice only would have betrayed, to an attentive obſerver, the agitation of his mind.

Ellena was conſiderably affected on ſeeing him again, and he examined with a jealous eye the emotions he witneſſed. The ſmile with which ſhe met him was tender, but he perceived it paſs away from her features, like the aërial colouring that illumines a mountain's brow; and the gloom of doubt and apprehenſion again overſpread them. As he advanced, he held forth his hand for her's, when ſuddenly perceiving the dagger he had left in the chamber, he involuntarily withdrew his proffered courteſy, and his countenance changed. Ellena, whoſe eyes followed his to the object that attracted them, pointed to the inſtrument, took it up, and approaching him ſaid, "This dagger

ger I found laſt night in my chamber! O my father!"—

"That dagger!" ſaid Schedoni, with affected ſurpriſe.

"Examine it," continued Ellena, while ſhe held it up, "Do you know to whom it belongs? and who brought it hither?"

"What is it you mean?" aſked Schedoni, betrayed by his feelings.

"Do you know, too, for what purpoſe it was brought?" ſaid Ellena mournfully.

The Confeſſor made no reply, but irreſolutely attempted to ſeize the inſtrument.

"O yes, I perceive you know too well," continued Ellena, "here, my father, while I ſlept."——

"Give me the dagger," interrupted Schedoni, in a frightful voice.

"Yes, my father, I will give it as an offering of my gratitude," replied Ellena, but as ſhe raiſed her eyes, filled with tears, his look and fixed attitude terrified her, and ſhe added with a ſtill more perſuaſive tenderneſs, "Will you not accept the offering of your child, for having preſerved her from the poniard of an aſſaſſin?"

Schedoni's looks became yet darker; he took the dagger in ſilence, and threw it with violence to the furtheſt end of the chamber, while his eyes remained fixed on her's. The force of the action alarmed her; "Yes, it is in vain that you would conceal the truth," ſhe added, weeping unreſtrainedly, "your goodneſs cannot avail; I know the whole."——

The laſt words arouſed Schedoni again from his trance, his features became convulſed, and his look furious. "What do you know?" he demanded in a ſubdued voice, that ſeemed ready to burſt in thunder.

"All

" All that I owe you," replied Ellena, that laſt night, while I ſlept upon this mattreſs, unſuſpicious of what was deſigned againſt me, an aſſaſſin entered the chamber with that inſtrument in his hand, and——"

A ſtifled groan from Schedoni checked Ellena; ſhe obſerved his rolling eyes, and trembled; till believing that his agitation was occaſioned by indignation againſt the aſſaſſin, ſhe reſumed, " Why ſhould you think it neceſſary to conceal the danger which has threatened me, ſince it is to you that I owe my deliverance from it? O! my father, do not deny me the pleaſure of ſhedding theſe tears of gratitude, do not refuſe the thanks which are due to you! While I ſlept upon that couch, while a ruffian ſtole upon my ſlumber—it was you, yes! can I ever forget that it was my father, who ſaved me from his poniard!"

Schedoni's paſſions were changed, but they were not leſs violent; he could ſcarcely controul them, while he ſaid in a tremulous tone—" It is enough, ſay no more; and he raiſed Ellena, but turned away without embracing her.

His ſtrong emotion, as he paced in ſilence the furtheſt end of the apartment, excited her ſurprize, but ſhe then attributed it to a remembrance of the perilous moment, from which he had reſcued her.

Schedoni, meanwhile, to whom her thanks were daggers, was trying to ſubdue the feelings of remorſe that tore his heart; and was ſo enveloped in a world of his own, as to be for ſome time unconſcious of all around him. He continued to ſtalk in gloomy ſilence along the chamber, till the voice of Ellena, entreating him rather to rejoice that he had been permitted to ſave her

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than ſo deeply to conſider dangers which were paſt, again touched the chord that vibrated to his conſcience, and recalled him to a ſenſe of his ſituation. He then bade her prepare for immediate departure, and abruptly quitted the room.

Vainly hoping that in flying from the ſcene of his meditated crime, he ſhould leave with it the acuteneſs of remembrance, and the agonizing ſtings of remorſe, he was now more anxious than ever to leave this place. Yet he ſhould ſtill be accompanied by Ellena, and her innocent looks, her affectionate thanks, inflicted an anguiſh which was ſcarcely endurable. Sometimes, thinking that her hatred, or what to him would be ſtill ſeverer, her contempt, muſt be more tolerable than this gratitude, he almoſt reſolved to undeceive her reſpecting his conduct, but as conſtantly and impatiently repelled the thought with horror, and finally determined to ſuffer her to account for his late extraordinary viſit in the way ſhe had choſen.

Spalatro, at length, returned from the hamlet with horſes, but without having procured a guide to conduct the travellers through a tract of the long-devolving foreſts of the Garganus, which it was neceſſary for them to paſs. No perſon had been willing to undertake ſo arduous a taſk; and Spalatro, who was well acquainted with all the labyrinths of the way, now offered his ſervices.

Schedoni, though he could ſcarcely endure the preſence of this man, had no alternative but to accept him, ſince he had diſmiſſed the guide who had conducted him hither. Of perſonal violence Schedoni had no apprehenſion, though he too well underſtood the villainy of his propoſed companion; for he conſidered that he himſelf

himſelf ſhould be well armed, and he determined to aſcertain that Spalatro was without weapons; he knew, alſo, that in caſe of a conteſt, his own ſuperior ſtature would eaſily enable him to overcome ſuch an antagoniſt.

Every thing being now ready for departure, Ellena was ſummoned, and the Confeſſor led her to his own apartment, where a ſlight breakfaſt was prepared.

Her ſpirits being revived by the ſpeed of this departure, ſhe would again have expreſſed her thanks, but he peremptorily interrupted her, and forbade any further mention of gratitude.

On entering the court where the horſes were in waiting, and perceiving Spalatro, Ellena ſhrunk and put her arm within Schedoni's for protection. "What recollections does the preſence of that man revive!" ſaid ſhe, "I can ſcarcely venture to believe myſelf ſafe, even with you, when he is here."

Schedoni made no reply, till the remark was repeated, "You have nothing to fear from him," muttered the Confeſſor, while he haſtened her forward, "and we have no time to loſe in vague apprehenſion."

"How!" exclaimed Ellena, "is not he the aſſaſſin from whom you ſaved me? I cannot doubt, that you know him to be ſuch, though you would ſpare me the pain of believing ſo."

"Well, well, be it ſo," replied the Confeſſor; "Spalatro lead the horſes this way."

The party were ſoon mounted, when, quitting this eventful manſion, and the ſhore of the Adriatic, as Ellena hoped for ever, they entered upon the gloomy wilderneſs of the Garganus. She often turned her eyes back upon the houſe with emotions of inexpreſſible awe, aſtoniſhment,

niſhment, and thankfulneſs, and gazed while a glimpſe of it's turreted walls could be caught beyond the dark branches, which, cloſing over it, at length ſhut it from her view. The joy of this departure, however, was conſiderably abated by the preſence of Spalatro, and her fearful countenance enquired of Schedoni the meaning of his being ſuffered to accompany them. The Confeſſor was reluctant to ſpeak concerning a man, of whoſe very exiſtence he would willingly have ceaſed to think. Ellena guided her horſe ſtill cloſer to Schedoni's, but, forbearing to urge the enquiry otherwiſe than by looks, ſhe received no reply, and endeavoured to quiet her apprehenſions, by conſidering that he would not have permitted this man to be their guide, unleſs he had believed he might be truſted. This conſideration, though it relieved her fears, encreaſed her perplexity reſpecting the late deſigns of Spalatro, and her ſurpriſe that Schedoni, if he had really underſtood them to be evil, ſhould endure his preſence. Every time ſhe ſtole a glance at the dark countenance of this man, rendered ſtill darker by the ſhade of the trees, ſhe thought "aſſaſſin" was written in each line of it, and could ſcarcely doubt that he, and not the people who had conducted her to the manſion, had dropped the dagger in her chamber. Whenever ſhe looked round through the deep glades, and on the foreſt-mountains that on every ſide cloſed the ſcene, and ſeemed to exclude all cheerful haunt of man, and then regarded her companions, her heart ſunk, notwithſtanding the reaſons ſhe had for believing herſelf in the protection of a father. Nay, the very looks of Schedoni himſelf, more than once reminding her of his appearance on the

ſea-

ſea-ſhore, renewed the impreſſions of alarm and even of diſmay, which ſhe had there experienced. At ſuch moments it was ſcarcely poſſible for her to conſider him as her parent, and, in ſpite of every late appearance, ſtrange and unaccountable doubts began to gather on her mind.

Schedoni, meanwhile, loſt in thought, broke not, by a ſingle word, the deep ſilence of the ſolitudes through which they paſſed. Spalatro was equally mute, and equally engaged by his reflections on the ſudden change in Schedoni's purpoſe, and by wonder as to the motive, which could have induced him to lead Ellena in ſafety, from the very ſpot whither ſhe was brought by his expreſs command to be deſtroyed. He, however, was not ſo wholly occupied, as to be unmindful of his ſituation, or unwatchful of an opportunity of ſerving his own intereſts, and retaliating upon Schedoni for the treatment he had received on the preceding night.

Among the various ſubjects that diſtracted the Confeſſor, the difficulty of diſpoſing of Ellena, without betraying at Naples that ſhe was his relative, was not the leaſt diſtreſſing. Whatever might be the reaſon which could juſtify ſuch feelings, his fears of a premature diſcovery of the circumſtance to the ſociety with whom he lived, were ſo ſtrong, as often to produce the moſt violent effect upon his countenance, and it was, perhaps, when he was occupied by this ſubject, that it's terrific expreſſion revived with Ellena the late ſcene upon the ſhore. His embarraſſment was not leſs, as to the excuſe to be offered the Marcheſa, for having failed to fulfil his engagement, and reſpecting the means by

which

which he might intereſt her in favour of Ellena, and even diſpoſe her to approve the marriage, before ſhe ſhould be informed of the family of this unfortunate young woman. Perceiving all the neceſſity for aſcertaining the probabilities of ſuch conſent, before he ventured to make an avowal of her origin, he determined, not to reveal himſelf till he ſhould be perfectly ſure that the diſcovery would be acceptable to the Marcheſa. In the mean time, as it would be neceſſary to ſay ſomething of Ellena's birth, he meant to declare, that he had diſcovered it to be noble, and her family worthy in every reſpect, of a connection with that of the Vivaldi.

An interview with the Marcheſa, was almoſt equally wiſhed for and dreaded by the Confeſſor. He ſhuddered at the expectation of meeting a woman, who had inſtigated him to the murder of his own child, which, though he had been happily prevented from committing it, was an act that would ſtill be wiſhed for by the Marcheſa. How could he endure her reproaches, when ſhe ſhould diſcover that he had failed to accompliſh her will! How conceal the indignation of a father, and diſſimulate all a father's various feelings, when, in reply to ſuch reproaches, he muſt form excuſes, and act humility, from which his whole ſoul would revolt! Never could his arts of diſſimulation have been ſo ſeverely tried, not even in the late ſcenes with Ellena, never have returned upon himſelf in puniſhment ſo ſevere, as in that which awaited him with the Marcheſa. And from it's approach, the cool and politic Schedoni often ſhrunk in ſuch horror, that he almoſt determined to avoid it at any hazard, and ſecretly to unite Vivaldi

and Ellena, without even ſoliciting the conſent of the Marcheſa.

A deſire, however, of the immediate preferment, ſo neceſſary to his pride, conſtantly checked this ſcheme, and finally made him willing to ſubject every honeſt feeling, and ſubmit to any meanneſs, however vicious, rather than forego the favourite object of his erroneous ambition. Never, perhaps, was the paradoxical union of pride and abjectneſs, more ſtrongly exhibited than on this occaſion.

While thus the travellers ſilently proceeded, Ellena's thoughts often turned to Vivaldi, and ſhe conſidered, with trembling anxiety, the effect which the late diſcovery was likely to have upon their future lives. It appeared to her, that Schedoni muſt approve of a connection thus flattering to the pride of a father, though he would probably refuſe his conſent to a private marriage. And, when ſhe further conſidered the revolution, which a knowledge of her family might occaſion towards herſelf in the minds of the Vivaldi, her proſpects ſeemed to brighten, and her cares began to diſſipate. Judging that Schedoni muſt be acquainted with the preſent ſituation of Vivaldi, ſhe was continually on the point of mentioning him, but was as conſtantly reſtrained by timidity, though, had ſhe ſuſpected him to be an inhabitant of the Inquiſition, her ſcruples would have vaniſhed before an irreſiſtible intereſt. As it was, believing that he, like herſelf, had been impoſed upon by the Marcheſa's agents, in the diſguiſe of officials, ſhe concluded, as has before appeared, that he now ſuffered a temporary impriſonment by order of his mother, at one of the family villas.

villas. When, however, Schedoni, awaking from his reverie, abruptly mentioned Vivaldi, her ſpirits fluttered with impatience to learn his exact ſituation, and ſhe enquired reſpecting it.

" I am no ſtranger to your attachment," ſaid Schedoni, evading the queſtion, " but I wiſh to be informed of ſome circumſtances relative to it's commencement."

Ellena, confuſed, and not knowing what to reply, was for a moment ſilent, and then repeated her enquiry.

" Where did you firſt meet ?" ſaid the Confeſſor, ſtill diſregarding her queſtion. Ellena related, that ſhe had firſt ſeen Vivaldi, when attending her aunt from the church of San Lorenzo. For the preſent ſhe was ſpared the embarraſſment of further explanation by Spalatro, who riding up to Schedoni, informed him they were approaching the town of Zanti. On looking forward, Ellena perceived houſes peeping from among the foreſt-trees, at a ſhort diſtance, and preſently heard the cheerful bark of a dog, that ſure herald and faithful ſervant of man !

Soon after the travellers entered Zanti, a ſmall town ſurrounded by the foreſt, where, however, the poverty of the inhabitants ſeemed to forbid a longer ſtay than was abſolutely neceſſary for repoſe, and a ſlight refreſhment. Spalatro led the way to a cabin, in which the few perſons, that journied this road were uſually entertained. The appearance of the people, who owned it, was as wild as their country, and the interior of the dwelling was ſo dirty and comfortleſs, that Schedoni, preferring to take his repaſt in the open air, a table was ſpread under the luxuriant ſhade of the foreſt-trees, at a little diſtance. Here, when the hoſt had withdrawn, and Spalatro had been diſ-

diſpatched to examine the poſt-horſes, and to procure a lay-habit for the Confeſſor, the latter, once more alone with Ellena, began to experience again ſomewhat of the embarraſſments of conſcience; and Ellena, whenever her eyes glanced upon him, ſuffered a ſolemnity of fear that roſe almoſt to terror. He, at length, terminated this emphatic ſilence, by renewing his mention of Vivaldi, and his command that Ellena ſhould relate the hiſtory of their affection. Not daring to refuſe, ſhe obeyed, but with as much brevity as poſſible, and Schedoni did not interrupt her by a ſingle obſervation. However eligible their nuptials now appeared to him, he forbore to give any hint of approbation, till he ſhould have extricated the object of her regards from his perilous ſituation. But, with Ellena, this very ſilence implied the opinion it was meant to conceal, and, encouraged by the hope it imparted, ſhe ventured once more to aſk, by whoſe order Vivaldi had been arreſted; whither he had been conveyed, and the circumſtances of his preſent ſituation.

Too politic to intruſt her with a knowledge of his actual condition, the Confeſſor ſpared her the anguiſh of learning that he was a priſoner in the Inquiſition. He affected ignorance of the late tranſaction at Celano, but ventured to believe, that both Vivaldi and herſelf had been arreſted by order of the Marcheſa, who, he conjectured, had thrown him into temporary confinement, a meaſure which ſhe, no doubt, had meant to enforce alſo towards Ellena.

"And you, my father," obſerved Ellena, "what brought you to my priſon,—you who was not informed with the Marcheſa's deſigns? What accident conducted you to that remote ſo-

litude, juſt at the moment when you could ſave your child !"

" Informed of the Marcheſa's deſigns !" ſaid Schedoni, with embarraſſment and diſpleaſure: " Have you ever imagined that I could be acceſſary—that I could conſent to aſſiſt, I mean could conſent to be a confidant of ſuch atrocious"—— Schedoni, bewildered, confounded, and half betrayed, checked himſelf.

" Yet you have ſaid, the Marcheſa meant only to confine me !" obſerved Ellena ; " was that deſign ſo atrocious ? Alas, my father ! I know too well that her plan was more atrocious, and ſince you had too much reaſon to know this, why do you ſay that impriſonment only was intended for me ? But your ſolicitude for my tranquility leads you to"———

" What means," interrupted the ſuſpicious Schedoni, " can I particularly have of underſtanding the Marcheſa's ſchemes ? I repeat, that I am not her confident ; how then is it to be ſuppoſed I ſhould know that they extended further than to impriſonment ?"

" Did you not ſave me from the arm of the aſſaſſin !" ſaid Ellena tenderly ; " did not you wrench the very dagger from his graſp !"

" I had forgotten, I had forgotten," ſaid the Confeſſor, yet more embarraſſed.

" Yes, good minds are ever thus apt to forget the benefits they confer," replied Ellena. " But you ſhall find, my father, that a grateful heart is equally tenacious to remember them ; it is the indelible regiſter of every act that is diſmiſſed from the memory of the benefactor."

" Mention no more of benefits," ſaid Schedoni, impatiently ; " let ſilence on this ſubject henceforth indicate your wiſh to oblige me."

He roſe, and joined the hoſt, who was at the door of his cabin. Schedoni wiſhed to diſmiſs

Spalatro

Spalatro as ſoon as poſſible, and he enquired for a guide to conduct him through that part of the foreſt, which remained to be traverſed. In this poor town, a perſon willing to undertake that office was eaſily to be found, but the hoſt went in queſt of a neighbour whom he had recommended.

Meanwhile Spalatro returned, without having ſucceeded in his commiſſion. Not any lay habit could be procured, upon ſo ſhort a notice, that ſuited Schedoni. He was obliged, therefore, to continue his journey to the next town at leaſt, in his own dreſs, but the neceſſity was not very ſerious to him, ſince it was improbable that he ſhould be known in this obſcure region.

Preſently the hoſt appeared with his neighbour, when Schedoni, having received ſatisfactory anſwers to his queſtions, engaged him for the remainder of the foreſt-road, and diſmiſſed Spalatro. The ruffian departed with ſullen reluctance and evident ill-will, circumſtances which the Confeſſor ſcarcely noticed, while occupied by the ſatisfaction of eſcaping from the preſence of the atrocious partner of his conſcience. But Ellena, as he paſſed her, obſerved the malignant diſappointment of his look, and it ſerved only to heighten the thankfulneſs his departure occaſioned her.

It was afternoon before the travellers proceeded. Schedoni had calculated that they could eaſily reach the town, at which they deſigned to paſs the night, before the cloſe of evening, and he had been in no haſte to depart during the heat of the day. Their track now lay through a country leſs ſavage, though ſcarcely leſs wild than that they had paſſed in the morning. It emerged from the in-

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terior towards the border of the foreſt; they were no longer encloſed by impending mountains; the withdrawing ſhades were no longer impenetrable to the eye, but now and then opened to gleams of ſunſhine-landſcape, and blue diſtances; and in the immediate ſcene, many a green glade ſpread it's boſom to the ſun. The grandeur of the trees, however, did not decline; the plane, the oak, and the cheſtnut ſtill threw a pomp of foliage round theſe ſmiling ſpots, and ſeemed to conſecrate the mountain ſtreams, that deſcended beneath their ſolemn ſhade.

To the haraſſed ſpirits of Ellena the changing ſcenery was refreſhing, and ſhe frequently yielded her cares to the influence of majeſtic nature. Over the gloom of Schedoni, no ſcenery had, at any moment, power; the ſhape and paint of external imagery gave neither impreſſion or colour to his fancy. He contemned the ſweet illuſions, to which other ſpirits are liable, and which often conſer a delight more exquiſite, and not leſs innocent, than any, which deliberative reaſon can beſtow.

The ſame thoughtful ſilence, that had wrapt him at the beginning of the journey, he ſtill preſerved, except when occaſionally he aſked a queſtion of the guide concerning the way, and received anſwers too loquacious for his humour. This loquacity, however, was not eaſily repreſſed, and the peaſant had already begun to relate ſome terrible ſtories of murder, committed in theſe foreſts upon people, who had been hardy enough to venture into them without a guide, before the abſtracted Schedoni even noticed that he ſpoke. Though Ellena did give much credit to theſe narratives, they had ſome effect upon her fears, which ſoon after ſhe entered the deep ſhades of a part

the foreſt, that lay along a narrow defile, whence every glimpſe of cheerful landſcape was again excluded by precipices, which towered on either ſide. The ſtilneſs was not leſs effectual than the gloom, for no ſounds were heard, except ſuch as ſeemed to characterize ſolitude, and impreſs it's awful power more deeply on the heart, —— the hollow daſhing of torrents deſcending diſtantly, and the deep ſighings of the wind, as it paſſed among trees, which threw their broad arms over the cliffs, and crowned the higheſt ſummits. Onward, through the narrowing windings of the defile, no living object appeared; but, as Ellena looked fearfully back, ſhe thought ſhe diſtinguiſhed a human figure advancing beneath the duſky umbrage that cloſed the view. She communicated her ſuſpicion to Schedoni, though not her fears, and they ſtopped for a moment, to obſerve further. The object advanced ſlowly, and they perceived the ſtature of a man, who, having continued to approach, ſuddenly pauſed, and then glided away behind the foliage that croſſed the perſpective, but not before Ellena fancied ſhe diſcriminated the figure of Spalatro. None but a purpoſe the moſt deſperate, ſhe believed, could have urged him to follow into this paſs, inſtead of returning, as he had pretended, to his home. Yet it appeared improbable, that he alone ſhould be willing to attack two armed perſons, for both Schedoni and the guide had weapons of defence. This conſideration afforded her only a momentary reſpite from apprehenſion, ſince it was poſſible that he might not be alone, though only one perſon had yet been ſeen among the ſhrouding branches of the woods. "Did you not think he reſembled Spalatro?" ſaid Ellena to the Con-

feſſor, " was he not of the ſame ſtature and air? You are well armed, or I ſhould fear for you, as well as for myſelf."

" I did not obſerve a reſemblance," replied Schedoni, throwing a glance back, " but whoever he is, you have nothing to apprehend from him, for he has diſappeared."

" Yes, Signor, ſo much the worſe," obſerved the guide, " ſo much the worſe, if he means us any harm, for he can ſteal along the rocks behind theſe thickets, and ſtrike out upon us before we are aware of him. Or, if he knows the path that runs among thoſe old oaks yonder, on the left, where the ground riſes, he has us ſure at the turning of the next cliff."

" Speak lower," ſaid Schedoni, " unleſs you mean that he ſhould benefit by your inſtructions."

Though the Confeſſor ſaid this without any ſuſpicion of evil intention from the guide, the man immediately began to juſtify himſelf, and added, " I'll give him a hint of what he may expect, however, if he attacks us." As he ſpoke, he fired his trombone in the air, when every rock reverberated the ſound, and the faint and fainter thunder retired in murmurs through all the windings of the defile. The eagerneſs, with which the guide had juſtified himſelf, produced an effect upon Schedoni contrary to what he deſigned; and the Confeſſor, as he watched him ſuſpiciouſly, obſerved, that after he had fired, he did not load his piece again. " Since you have given the enemy ſufficient intimation where to find us," ſaid Schedoni, " you will do well to prepare for his reception; load again, friend. I have arms too, and they are ready."

While the man ſullenly obeyed, Ellena, again alarmed, looked back in ſearch of the ſtranger, but

but not any perſon appeared beneath the gloom, and no foot-ſtep broke upon the ſtilneſs. When, however, ſhe ſuddenly heard a ruſtling noiſe, ſhe looked to the bordering thickets, almoſt expecting to ſee Spalatro break from among them, before ſhe perceived that it was only the ſounding pinions of birds, which, ſtartled by the report of the trombone from their high neſts in the cliffs, winged their way from danger.

The ſuſpicions of the Confeſſor had, probably, been ſlight, for they were tranſient; and when Ellena next addreſſed him, he had again retired within himſelf. He was ruminating upon an excuſe to be offered the Marcheſa, which might be ſufficient both to aſſuage her diſappointment and baffle her curioſity, and he could not, at preſent, fabricate one that might ſoothe her reſentment, without riſk of betraying his ſecret.

Twilight had added its gloom to that of the rocks, before the travellers diſtinguiſhed the town, at which they meant to paſs the night. It terminated the defile, and its grey houſes could ſcarcely be diſcerned from the precipice upon which they hung, or from the trees that embo-ſomed them. A rapid ſtream rolled below, and over it a bridge conducted the wanderers to the little inn, at which they were to take up their abode. Here, quietly lodged, Ellena diſmiſſed all preſent apprehenſion of Spalatro, but ſhe ſtill believed ſhe had ſeen him, and her ſuſpicions, as to the motive of his extraordinary journey, were not appeaſed.

As this was a town of ampler accommoda-tion than the one they had left, Schedoni eaſily procured a lay-habit, that would diſguiſe him for the remainder of the journey; and Ellena was permitted to lay aſide the nun's veil, for one of a

more general faſhion; but, in diſmiſſing it, ſhe did not forget that it had been the veil of Olivia, and ſhe preſerved it as a ſacred relique of her favourite recluſe.

The diſtance between this town and Naples was ſtill that of ſeveral days journey, according to the uſual mode of travelling; but the moſt dangerous part of the way was now overcome, the road having emerged from the foreſts; and when Schedoni, on the following morning was departing, he would have diſcharged the guide, had not the hoſt aſſured him, he would find one ſtill neceſſary in the open, but wild, country through which he muſt paſs. Schedoni's diſtruſt of this guide had never been very ſerious, and, as the reſult of the preceding evening proved favourable, he had reſtored him ſo entirely to his confidence, as willingly to engage him for the preſent day. In this confidence, however, Ellena did not perfectly coincide; ſhe had obſerved the man while he loaded the trombone, on Schedoni's order, and his evident reluctance had almoſt perſuaded her, that he was in league with ſome perſon who deſigned to attack them; a conjecture, perhaps, the more readily admitted while her mind was ſuffering from the impreſſion of having ſeen Spalatro. She now ventured to hint her diſtruſt to the Confeſſor, who paid little attention to it, and reminded her, that ſufficient proof of the man's honeſty had appeared, in their having been permitted to paſs in ſafety, a defile ſo convenient for the purpoſe of rapine as that of yeſterday. To a reply apparently ſo reaſonable, Ellena could oppoſe nothing, had ſhe even dared to preſs the topic; and ſhe re-commenced the journey with gayer hopes.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Mark where yon ruin frowns upon the ſteep,
The giant-ſpectre of departed power!
Within thoſe ſhadowy walls and ſilent chambers
Have ſtalked the crimes of days long paſt!

ON this day, Schedoni was more communicative than on the preceding one. While they rode apart from the guide, he converſed with Ellena on various topics relative to herſelf, but without once alluding to Vivaldi; and even condeſcended to mention his deſign of diſpoſing of her in a convent at ſome diſtance from Naples, till it ſhould be convenient for him to acknowledge her for his daughter. But the difficulty of finding a ſuitable ſituation embarraſſed him, and he was diſconcerted by the aukwardneſs of introducing her himſelf to ſtrangers, whoſe curioſity would be heightened by a ſenſe of their intereſt.

Theſe circumſtances induced him the more eaſily to attend to the diſtreſs of Ellena, on her learning that ſhe was again to be placed at a diſtance from her home, and among ſtrangers; and the more willingly to liſten to the account ſhe gave of the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta, and to her requeſt of returning thither. But in whatever degree he might be inclined to approve, he liſtened without conſenting, and Ellena had only the conſolation of perceiving that he was not abſolutely determined to adopt his firſt plan.

Her thoughts were too deeply engaged upon her future proſpects to permit leiſure for preſent fears, or probably ſhe would have ſuffered ſome return of thoſe of yeſterday, in traverſing the lonely plains and rude vallies, through which the road lay. Schedoni was thankful to the landlord, who had adviſed him to keep the guide, the road being frequently obſcured amongſt the wild heaths that ſtretched around, and the eye often ſweeping over long tracts of country, without perceiving a village or any human dwelling. During the whole morning, they had not met one traveller, and they continued to proceed beneath the heath of noon, becauſe Schedoni had been unable to diſcover even a cottage, in which ſhelter and repoſe might be obtained.

It was late in the day when the guide pointed out the grey walls of an edifice which crowned the acclivity they were approaching. But this was ſo ſhrouded among woods, that no feature of it could be diſtinctly ſeen, and it did but ſlightly awaken their hopes of approaching a convent, which might receive them with hoſpitality.

The high banks overſhadowed with thickets, between which the road aſcended, ſoon excluded even a glimpſe of the walls; but, as the travellers turned the next projection, they perceived a perſon on the ſummit of the road, croſſing as if towards ſome place of reſidence, and concluded that the edifice they had ſeen was behind the trees, among which he had diſappeared.

A few moments brought them to the ſpot, where, retired at a ſhort diſtance among the woods that browed the hill, they diſcovered the extenſive remains of what ſeemed to have been a villa, and which, from the air of deſolation it exhibited, Schedoni would have judged to be wholly

wholly deſerted, had he not already ſeen a perſon enter. Wearied and exhauſted, he determined to aſcertain whether any refreſhment could be procured from the inhabitants within, and the party alighted before the portal of a deep and broad avenue of arched ſtone, which ſeemed to have been the grand approach to the villa. The entrance was obſtructed by fallen fragments of columns, and by the underwood that had taken root amongſt them. The travellers, however, eaſily overcame theſe interruptions: but as the avenue was of conſiderable extent, and as its only light proceeded from the portal, except what a few narrow loops in the walls admitted, they ſoon found themſelves involved in an obſcurity that rendered the way difficult, and Schedoni endeavoured to make himſelf heard by the perſon he had ſeen. The effort was unſucceſsful, but as they proceeded, a bend in the paſſage ſhewed a diſtant glimmering of light, which ſerved to guide them to the oppoſite entrance, where an arch opened immediately into a court of the villa. Schedoni pauſed here in diſappointment, for every object ſeemed to bear evidence of abandonment and deſolation; and he looked, almoſt hopeleſsly, round the light colonnade which ran along three ſides of the court, and to the trees that waved over the fourth, in ſearch of the perſon, who had been ſeen from the road. No human figure ſtole upon the vacancy; yet the apt fears of Ellena almoſt imagined the form of Spalatro gliding behind the columns, and ſhe ſtarted as the air ſhook over the wild plants that wreathed them, before ſhe diſcovered that it was not the ſound of ſteps. At the extravagance of her ſuſpicions, however, and the weakneſs of her terrors, ſhe bluſhed, and endeavoured to re-

ſiſt that propenſity to fear, which nerves long preſſe upon had occaſioned in her mind.

Schedoni, meanwhile, ſtood in the court, like the evil ſpirit of the place, examining its deſolation, and endeavouring to aſcertain whether any perſon lurked in the interior of the building. Several doorways in the colonnade appeared to lead to chambers of the villa; and, after a ſhort heſitation, Schedoni, having determined to purſue his inquiry, entered one of them, and paſſed through a marble hall to a ſuite of rooms, whoſe condition told how long it was ſince they had been inhabited. The roofs had entirely vaniſhed, and even portions of the walls had fallen, and lay in maſſes amognſt the woods without.

Perceiving that it was as uſeleſs as difficult to proceed, the Confeſſor returned to the court, where the ſhade of the palmetos, at leaſt, offered an hoſpitable ſhelter to the wearied travellers. They repoſed themſelves beneath the branches, on ſome fragments of a marble fountain, whence the court opened to the extenſive landſcape, now mellowed by the evening beams, and partook of the remains of a repaſt, which had been depoſited in the wallet of the guide.

"This place appears to have ſuffered from an earthquake, rather than from time," ſaid Schedoni, "for the walls, though ſhattered, do not ſeem to have decayed, and much that has been ſtrong lies in ruin, while what is comparatively ſlight remains uninjured; theſe are certainly ſymptoms of partial ſhocks of the earth. Do you know any thing of the hiſtory of this place, friend?"

"Yes, Signor," replied the guide.

"Relate it, then."

"I ſhall

" I ſhall never forget the earthquake that deſtroyed it, Signor; for it was felt all through the Garganus. I was then about ſixteen, and I remember it was near an hour before midnight that the great ſhock was felt. The weather had been almoſt ſtifling for ſeveral days, ſcarcely a breath of air had ſtirred, and ſlight tremblings of the ground were noticed by many people. I had been out all day, cutting wood in the foreſt with my father, and tired enough we were, when——"

" This is the hiſtory of yourſelf," ſaid Schedoni, interrupting him, " Who did this place belong to?"

" Did any perſon ſuffer here?" ſaid Ellena.

" The Baróne di Cambruſca lived here," replied the guide.

" Hah! the Baróne!" repeated Schedoni, and ſunk into one of his cuſtomary fits of abſtraction.

" He was a Signor little loved in the country," continued the guide, " and ſome people ſaid it was a judgment upon him for——"

" Was it not rather a judgment upon the country," interrupted the Confeſſor, lifting up his head, and then ſinking again into ſilence.

" I know not for that, Signor, but he had committed crimes enough to make one's hair ſtand on end. It was here that he——"

" Fools are always wondering at the actions of thoſe above them," ſaid Schedoni, teſtily; " Where is the Baróne now?"

" I cannot tell, Signor, but moſt likely where he deſerves to be, for he has never been heard of ſince the night of the earthquake, and it is believed he was buried under the ruins."

" Did any other perſon ſuffer?" repeated Ellena.

" You

"You ſhall hear, Signora, replied the peaſant, "I happen to know ſomething about the matter, becauſe a couſin of our's lived in the family at the time, and my father has often told me all about it, as well as of the late lord's goings-on. It was near midnight when the great ſhock came, and the family, thinking of nothing at all, had ſupped, and been aſleep ſome time. Now it happened that the Baróne's chamber was in a tower of the old building, at which people often wondered, becauſe, ſaid they, why ſhould he chuſe to ſleep in the old part where there are ſo many fine rooms in the new villa? but ſo it was."

"Come, diſpatch your meal," ſaid Schedoni, awaking from his deep muſing, "the ſun is ſetting, and we have yet far to go."

"I will finiſh the meal and the ſtory together, Signor, with your leave," replied the guide. Schedoni did not notice what he ſaid, and as the man was not forbidden, he proceeded with his relation.

"Now it happened, that the Baróne's chamber was in that old tower,—if you will look this way, Signora, you may ſee what is left of it."

Ellena turned her attention to where the guide pointed, and perceived the ſhattered remains of a tower riſing beyond the arch, through which ſhe had entered the court.

"You ſee that corner of a window-caſe, left in the higheſt part of the wall, Signora," continued the guide, "juſt by that tuft of aſh that grows out of the ſtone."

"I obſerve," ſaid Ellena.

"Well, that was one of the windows of the very chamber, Signora, and you ſee ſcarcely any thing elſe is left of it. Yes, there is the door-caſe too, but the door itſelf is gone; that little

ſtair-caſe

ſtair-caſe, which you ſee beyond it, led up to another ſtory, which nobody now would gueſs had ever been; for roof, and flooring, and all are fallen. I wonder how that little ſtaircaſe in the corner happened to hold ſo faſt!"

"Have you almoſt done?" inquired Schedoni, who had not apparently attended to any thing the man ſaid, and now alluded to the refreſhment he was taking.

"Yes, Signor, I have not a great deal more to tell, or to eat either, for that matter," replied the guide; but you ſhall hear. Well, yonder was the very chamber, Signora, at that door-caſe, which is ſtill in the wall, the Baróne came in; ah! he little thought, I warrant, that he ſhould never more go out at it! How long he had been in the room I do not know, nor whether he was aſleep, or awake, for there is nobody that can tell; but when the great ſhock came, it ſplit the old tower at once, before any other part of the buildings. You ſee that heap of ruins, yonder, on the ground, Signora, there lie the remains of the chamber; the Baróne, they ſay, was buried under them!"

Ellena ſhuddered while ſhe gazed upon this deſtructive maſs. A groan from Schedoni ſtartled her, and ſhe turned towards him, but, as he appeared ſhrouded in meditation, ſhe again directed her attention to this awful memorial. As her eye paſſed upon the neighbouring arch, ſhe was ſtruck with the grandeur of its proportions, and with its ſingular appearance, now that the evening rays glanced upon the overhanging ſhrubs, and darted a line of partial light athwart the avenue beyond. But what was her emotion, when ſhe perceived a perſon gliding away in the perſpective of the avenue, and, as he croſſed where

where the gleam fell, distinguished the figure and countenance of Spalatro! She had scarcely power faintly to exclaim, "Steps go there!" before he had disappeared; and, when Schedoni looked round, the vacuity and silence of solitude every where prevailed.

Ellena now did not scruple positively to affirm that she had seen Spalatro, and Schedoni fully sensible that, if her imagination had not deluded her, the purpose of his thus tracing their route must be desperate, immediately rose, and, followed by the peasant, passed into the avenue to ascertain the truth, leaving Ellena alone in the court. He had scarcely disappeared before the danger of his adventuring into that obscure passage, where an assassin might strike unseen, forcibly occurred to Ellena, and she loudly conjured him to return. She listened for his voice, but heard only his retreating steps; when, too anxious to remain where she was, she hastened to the entrance of the avenue. But all was now hushed; neither voice, nor steps were distinguished. Awed by the gloom of the place, she feared to venture further, yet almost equally dreaded to remain alone in any part of the ruin, while a man so desperate as Spalatro was hovering about it.

As she yet listened at the entrace of the avenue, a faint cry, which seemed to issue from the interior of the villa, reached her. The first dreadful surmise that struck Ellena was, that they were murdering her father, who had probably been decoyed, by another passage, back into some chamber of the ruin; when, instantly forgetting every fear for herself, she hastened towards the spot whence she judged the sound to have issued. She entered the hall, which Schedoni

doni had noticed, and paſſed on through a ſuit of apartments beyond. Every thing here, however, was ſilent, and the place apparently deſerted. The ſuit terminated in a paſſage, that ſeemed to lead to a diſtant part of the villa, and Ellena, after a momentary heſitation, determined to follow it.

She made her way with difficulty between the half-demoliſhed walls, and was obliged to attend ſo much to her ſteps, that ſhe ſcarcely noticed whither ſhe was going, till the deepening ſhade of the place recalling her attention, ſhe perceived herſelf among the ruins of the tower, whoſe hiſtory had been related by the guide; and, on looking up, obſerved ſhe was at the foot of the ſtaircaſe, which ſtill wound up the wall, that had led to the chamber of the Baróne.

At a moment leſs anxious, the circumſtance would have affected her; but now ſhe could only repeat her calls upon the name of Schedoni, and liſten for ſome ſignal that he was near. Still receiving no anſwer, nor hearing any further ſound of diſtreſs, ſhe began to hope that her fears had deceived her, and having aſcertained that the paſſage terminated here, ſhe quitted the ſpot.

On regaining the firſt chamber, Ellena reſted for a moment to recover breath; and, while ſhe leaned upon what had once been a window, opening to the court, ſhe heard a diſtant report of fire-arms. The ſound ſwelled, and ſeemed to revolve along the avenue through which Schedoni had diſappeared.——Suppoſing that the combatants were engaged at the fartheſt entrance, Ellena was preparing to go thither, when a ſudden ſtep moved near her, and, on turning,

turning, ſhe diſcovered, with a degree of horror that almoſt deprived her of recollection, Spalatro himſelf ſtealing along the very chamber in which ſhe was.

That part of the room which ſhe ſtood in, fell into a kind of receſs; and whether it was this circumſtance that prevented him from immediately perceiving her, or that, his chief purpoſe being directed againſt another object, he did not chuſe to pauſe here, he paſſed on with ſkulking ſteps; and, before Ellena had determined whither to go, ſhe obſerved him croſs the court before her, and enter the avenue. As he had paſſed, he looked up at the window: and it was certain he then ſaw her, for he inſtantly faultered, but in the next moment proceeded ſwiftly, and diſappeared in the gloom.

It ſeemed that he had not yet encountered Schedoni, but it alſo occurred to Ellena that he was gone into the avenue for the purpoſe of waiting to aſſaſſinate him in the darkneſs. While ſhe was meditating ſome means of giving the Confeſſor a timely alarm of his danger, ſhe once more diſtinguiſhed his voice. It approached from the avenue, and Ellena immediately calling aloud that Spalatro was there, entreated him to be on his guard. In the next inſtant a piſtol was fired there.

Among the voices that ſucceeded the report, Ellena thought ſhe diſtinguiſhed groans. Schedoni's voice was in the next moment heard again, but it ſeemed faint and low. The courage which ſhe had before exerted was now exhauſted; ſhe remained fixed to the ſpot, unable to encounter the dreadful ſpectacle that probably awaited her in the avenue, and almoſt ſinking beneath the expectation of it.

All

All was now huſhed; ſhe liſtened for Schedoni's voice, and even for a footſtep—in vain. To endure this ſtate of uncertainty much longer was ſcarcely poſſible, and Ellena was endeavouring to collect fortitude to meet a knowledge of the worſt, when ſuddenly a feeble groaning was again heard. It ſeemed near, and to be approaching ſtill nearer. At that moment, Ellena, on looking towards the avenue, perceived a figure covered with blood, paſs into the court. A film, which drew over her eyes, prevented her noticing farther. She tottered a few paces back, and caught at the fragment of a pillar, by which ſhe ſupported herſelf. The weakneſs was tranſient; immediate aſſiſtance appeared neceſſary to the wounded perſon, and pity ſoon predominating over horror, ſhe recalled her ſpirits, and haſtened to the court.

When on reaching it, ſhe looked round in ſearch of Schedoni, he was no where to be ſeen; the court was again ſolitary and ſilent, till ſhe awakened all its echoes with the name of *father*. While ſhe repeated her calls, ſhe haſtily examined the colonnade, the ſeparated chamber which opened immediately from it, and the ſhadowy ground beneath the palmetos, but without diſcovering any perſon.

As ſhe turned towards the avenue, however, a track of blood on the ground told her too certainly where the wounded perſon had paſſed. It guided her to the entrance of a narrow paſſage, that ſeemingly led to the foot of the tower; but here ſhe heſitated, fearing to truſt the obſcurity beyond. For the firſt time, Ellena conjectured, that not Schedoni, but Spalatro might be the perſon ſhe had ſeen, and that, though

though he was wounded, vengeance might give him ſtrength to ſtrike his ſtiletto at the heart of whomſoever approached him, while the duſkineſs of the place would favour the deed.

She was yet at the entrance of the paſſage, fearful to enter, and reluctant to leave it, liſtening for a ſound, and ſtill hearing at intervals, ſwelling though feeble groans; when quick ſteps were ſuddenly heard advancing up the grand avenue, and preſently her own name was repeated loudly in the voice of Schedoni. His manner was hurried as he advanced to meet her, and he threw an eager glance round the court. "We muſt be gone," ſaid he, in a low tone, and taking her arm within his. "Have you ſeen any one paſs?"

"I have ſeen a wounded man enter the court," replied Ellena, "and feared he was yourſelf."

"Where?—Which way did he go!" inquired Schedoni, eagerly, while his eyes glowed, and his countenance became fell.

Ellena inſtantly comprehending his motive for the queſtion, would not acknowledge that ſhe knew whither Spalatro had withdrawn; and, reminding him of the danger of their ſituation, ſhe entreated that they might quit the villa immediately.

"The ſun is already ſet," ſhe added. "I tremble at what may be the perils of this place at ſuch an obſcure hour, and even at what may be thoſe of our road at a later!"

"You are ſure he was wounded?" ſaid the Confeſſor.

"Too ſure," replied Ellena, faintly.

"Too ſure!" ſternly exclaimed Schedoni.

"Let

"Let us depart, my father; O let us go this inſtant!" repeated Ellena.

"What is the meaning of all this!" aſked Schedoni, with anger. "You cannot, ſurely, have the weakneſs to pity this fellow!"

"It is terrible to ſee any one ſuffer," ſaid Ellena. "Do not, by remaining here, leave me a poſſibility of grieving for you. What anguiſh it would occaſion you, to ſee me bleed; judge, then, what muſt be mine, if you are wounded by the dagger of an aſſaſſin!"

Schedoni ſtifled the groan which ſwelled from his heart, and abruptly turned away.

"You trifle with me," he ſaid, in the next moment: "you do not know that the villain is wounded. I fired at him, it is true, at the inſtant I ſaw him enter the avenue, but he has eſcaped me. What reaſon have you for your ſuppoſition?"

Ellena was going to point to the track of blood on the ground, at a little diſtance, but checked herſelf; conſidering that this might guide him on to Spalatro, and again ſhe entreated they might depart, adding, "O! ſpare yourſelf, and him!"

"What! ſpare an aſſaſſin!" ſaid Schedoni, impatiently.

"An aſſaſſin! He *has*, then, attempted your life?" exclaimed Ellena.

"Why no, not abſolutely that," ſaid Schedoni, recollecting himſelf,—"but what does the fellow do here? Let me paſs, I will find him."

Ellena ſtill hung upon his garment, while, with perſuaſive tenderneſs, ſhe endeavoured to awaken his humanity. "O! if you had ever known what it was to expect inſtant death," ſhe continued, "you would pity this man now, as he,

though he was wounded, vengeance might give him ſtrength to ſtrike his ſtiletto at the heart of whomſoever approached him, while the duſkineſs of the place would favour the deed.

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he, perhaps has ſometimes pitied others! I have known ſuch ſuffering, my father, and can, therefore, feel even for him!"

"Do you know for *whom* you are pleading?" ſaid the diſtracted Schedoni, while every word ſhe had uttered ſeemed to have penetrated his heart. The ſurprize which this queſtion awakened in Ellena's countenance, recalled him to a conſciouſneſs of his imprudence; he recollected that Ellena did not certainly know the office, with which Spalatro had been commiſſioned againſt her: and when he conſidered that this very Spalatro whom Ellena had with ſuch ſimplicity ſuppoſed to have, at ſome time, ſpared a life through pity, had in truth ſpared her own, and, yet more, had been eventually a means of preventing him from deſtroying his own child, the Confeſſor turned in horror from his deſign; all his paſſions changed, and he abruptly quitted the court, nor pauſed till he reached the fartheſt extremity of the avenue, where the guide was in waiting with the horſes.

A recollection of the conduct of Spalatro reſpecting Ellena had thus induced Schedoni to ſpare him; but this was all; it did not prevail with him to enquire into the condition of this man, or to mitigate his puniſhment; and, without remorſe, he now left him to his fate.

With Ellena it was otherwiſe; though ſhe was ignorant of the obligation ſhe owed him, ſhe could not know that any human being was left under ſuch circumſtances of ſuffering and ſolitude, without experiencing very painful emotion; but, conſidering how expeditiouſly Spalatro had been able to remove himſelf, ſhe endeavoured to hope that his wound was not mortal.

The travellers, mounting their horſes in ſilence, left the ruin, and were for ſome time too much engaged by the impreſſion of the late occurrences, to converſe together. When, at length, Ellena inquired the particulars of what had paſſed in the avenue, ſhe underſtood that Schedoni, on purſuing Spalatro, had ſeen him there only for a moment: Spalatro had eſcaped by ſome way unknown to the Confeſſor, and had regained the interior of the ruin, while his purſuers were yet following the avenue. The cry, which Ellena had imagined to proceed from the interior, was uttered, as it now appeared, by the guide, who, in his haſte, had fallen over ſome fragments of the wall that lay ſcattered in the avenue: the firſt report of arms had been from the trombone, which Schedoni had diſcharged on reaching the portal; and the laſt, when he fired a piſtol, on perceiving Spalatro paſſing from the court.

"We have had trouble enough in running after this fellow," ſaid the guide, "and could not catch him at laſt. It is ſtrange that, if he came to look for us, he ſhould run away ſo when he had found us! I do not think he meant us any harm, after all, elſe he might have done it eaſily enough in that dark paſſage; inſtead whereof he only took to his heels!"

"Silence!" ſaid Schedoni, "fewer words, friend."

"Well, Signor, he's peppered now, however; ſo we need not be afraid; his wings are clipped for one while, ſo he cannot overtake us. We need not be in ſuch a hurry, Signor, we ſhall get to the inn in good time yet. It is upon a mountain yonder, whoſe top you may ſee upon that red ſtreak in the weſt. He cannot come after us; I myſelf ſaw his arm was wounded."

"Did you ſo?" ſaid Schedoni, ſharply: "and pray where was you when you ſaw ſo much? It was more than I ſaw."

"I was cloſe at your heels, Signor, when you fired the piſtol."

"I do not remember to have heard you there," obſerved the Confeſſor: "and why did you not come forward, inſtead of retreating? And where, alſo, did you hide yourſelf while I was ſearching for the fellow, inſtead of aſſiſting me in the purſuit?"

The guide gave no anſwer, and Ellena, who had been attentively obſerving him during the whole of this converſation, perceived that he was now conſiderably embarraſſed; ſo that her former ſuſpicions as to his integrity began to revive, notwithſtanding the ſeveral circumſtances, which had occurred to render them improbable. There was, however, at preſent no opportunity for farther obſervation, Schedoni having, contrary to the advice of the guide, immediately quickened his pace, and the horſes continuing on the full gallop, till a ſteep aſcent compelled them to relax their ſpeed.

Contrary to his uſual habit, Schedoni now, while they ſlowly aſcended, appeared deſirous of converſing with this man, and aſked him ſeveral queſtions relative to the villa they had left; and, whether it was that he really felt an intereſt on the ſubject, or that he wiſhed to diſcover if the man had deceived him in the circumſtances he had already narrated, from which he might form a judgment as to his general character, he preſſed his inquiries with a patient minuteneſs, that ſomewhat ſurprized Ellena. During this converſation, the deep twilight would no longer permit her to notice the countenances of either Schedoni, or the guide,

guide, but ſhe gave much attention to the chang-ing tones of their voices, as different circumſtan-ces and emotions ſeemed to affect them. It is to be obſerved, that during the whole of this diſcourſe, the guide rode at the ſide of Sche-doni.

While the Confeſſor appeared to be muſing upon ſomething which the peaſant had related reſpecting the Baróne di Cambruſca, Ellena in-quired as to the fate of the other inhabitants of the villa.

"The falling of the old tower was enough for them," replied the guide; "the craſh waked them all directly, and they had time to get out of the new buildings, before the ſecond and third ſhocks laid them alſo in ruins. They ran out in-to the woods for ſafety, and found it too, for they happened to take a different road from the earth-quake. Not a ſoul ſuffered, except the Baróne, and he obſerved it well enough. O! I could tell ſuch things that I have heard of him!—"

"What became of the reſt of the family?" interrupted Schedoni.

"Why, Signor, they were ſcattered here and there, and every where; and they none of them ever returned to the old ſpot. No! no! they had ſuffered enough there already, and might have ſuffered to this day, if the earthquake had not happened."

"If it had *not* happened?" repeated El-lena.

"Aye, Signora, for that put an end to the Baróne. If thoſe walls could but ſpeak, they would tell ſtrange things, for they have looked on ſad doings: and that chamber, which I ſhewed you, Signora, nobody ever went into it

but himſelf, except the ſervant, to keep it in order, and that he would ſcarcely ſuffer, and always ſtaid in the room the while."

"He had probably treaſure ſecreted there," ſaid Ellena.

"No, Signora, no treaſure! He had always a lamp burning there; and ſometimes in the night he has been heard—Once, indeed, his valet happened to——"

"Come on," ſaid Schedoni, interrupting him; "keep pace with me. What idle dream are you relating now?"

"It is about the Baróne di Cambruſca, Signor, him that you was aſking me ſo much about juſt now. I was ſaying what ſtrange ways he had, and how that, on one ſtormy night in December, as my couſin Franciſco told my father, who told me, and he lived in the family at the time it happened——"

"What happened?" ſaid Schedoni, haſtily.

"What I am going to tell, Signor. My couſin lived there at the time; ſo, however *unbelievable* it may ſeem, you may depend upon it, it is true. My father knows I would not believe myſelf till——"

"Enough of this," ſaid Schedoni; "more. What family had this Baróne—had he wife at the time of this deſtructive ſhock?"

"Yes, truly, Signor, he had, as I was going to tell, if you would but condeſcend to have patience."

"The Baróne had more need of that, friend, I have no wife."—"The Baróne's wife had moſt need of it, Signor, as you ſhall hear. The good ſoul, they ſay, was the Baroneſſa! But luckily ſhe died many years before. He had daught

daughter, alſo, and, young as ſhe was, ſhe had lived too long, but for the earthquake which ſet her free."

"How far is it to the inn?" ſaid the Confeſſor, roughly.

"When we get to the top of this hill, Signor, you will ſee it on the next, if any light is ſtirring, for there will only be the hollow between us. But do not be alarmed, Signor, the fellow we left cannot overtake us. Do you know much about him, Signor?"

Schedoni inquired whether the trombone was charged; and, diſcovering that it was not, ordered the man to load immediately.

"Why, Signor, if you knew as much of him as I do, you could not be more afraid!" ſaid the peaſant, while he ſtopped to obey the order.

"I underſtood that he was a ſtranger to you!" obſerved the Confeſſor, with ſurprize.

"Why, Signor, he is, and he is not; I know more about him than he thinks for."

"You ſeem to know a vaſt deal too much of other perſons affairs," ſaid Schedoni, in a tone that was meant to ſilence him.

"Why, that is juſt what he would ſay, Signor; but bad deeds will out, whether people like them to be known or not. This man comes to our town ſometimes to market, and nobody knew where he came from for a long while; ſo they ſet themſelves to work and found it out at laſt."

"We ſhall never reach the ſummit of this hill," ſaid Schedoni, teſtily.

"And they found out, too, a great many ſtrange things about him," continued the guide.

Ellena, who had attended to this diſcourſe with a degree of curioſity that was painful, now

liſtened impatiently for what might be farther mentioned concerning Spalatro, but without daring to invite, by a ſingle queſtion, any diſcovery on a ſubject which appeared to be ſo intimately connected with Schedoni.

"It was many years ago," rejoined the guide, "that this man came to live in that ſtrange houſe on the ſea-ſhore. It had been ſhut up ever ſince———"

"What are you talking of now?" interrupted the Confeſſor.

"Why, Signor, you never will let me tell you. You always ſnap me up ſo ſhort at the beginning, and then aſk—what am I talking about! I was going to begin the ſtory, and it is a pretty long one. But firſt of all, Signor, who do you ſuppoſe this man belonged to! And what do you think the people determined to do, when the report was firſt ſet a going? only they could not be ſure it was true, and any body would be unwilling enough to believe ſuch a ſhocking——"

"I have no curioſity on the ſubject," replied the Confeſſor, ſternly interrupting him; "and deſire to hear no more concerning it."

"I meant no harm, Signor," ſaid the man; "I did not know it concerned you."

"And who ſays that it does concern me!"

"Nobody, Signor, only you ſeemed to be in a bit of a paſſion, and ſo I thought——But I meant no harm, Signor, only as he happened to be your guide part of the way, I gueſſed you might like to know ſomething of him."

"All that I deſire to know of my guide is, that he does his duty," replied Schedoni, "that he conducts me ſafely, and underſtands when to be ſilent."

To

To this the man replied nothing, but ſlackened his pace, and ſlunk behind his reprover.

The travellers reaching, ſoon after, the ſummit of this long hill, looked out for the inn of which they had been told; but darkneſs now confounded every object, and no domeſtic light twinkling, however diſtantly, through the gloom, gave ſignal of ſecurity and comfort. They deſcended dejectedly into the hollow of the mountains, and found themſelves once more immerged in woods. Schedoni again called the peaſant to his ſide, and bade him keep abreaſt of him, but he did not diſcourſe; and Ellena was too thoughtful to attempt converſation. The hints which the guide had thrown out reſpecting Spalatro, had increaſed her curioſity on that ſubject; but the conduct of Schedoni, his impatience, his embarraſſment, and the deciſive manner in which he had put an end to the talk of the guide, excited a degree of ſurprize, that bordered on aſtoniſhment. As ſhe had, however, no clue to lead her conjectures to any point, ſhe was utterly bewildered in ſurmiſe, underſtanding only that Schedoni had been much more deeply connected with Spalatro than ſhe had hitherto believed.

The travellers having deſcended into the hollow, and commenced the aſcent of the oppoſite height, without diſcovering any ſymptom of a neighbouring town, began again to fear that their conductor had deceived them. It was now ſo dark that the road, though the ſoil was a lime-ſtone, could ſcarcely be diſcerned, the woods on either ſide forming "a cloſe dungeon of innumerous boughs," that totally excluded the twilight of the ſtars.

While the Confeſſor was queſtioning the man, with ſome ſeverity, a faint ſhouting was heard

from a diſtance, and he ſtopped the horſes to liſten from what quarter it came.

" That comes the way we are going, Signor," ſaid the guide.

" Hark!" exclaimed Schedoni, " thoſe are ſtrains of revelry!"

A confuſed ſound of voices, laughter, and muſical inſtruments, was heard, and, as the air blew ſtronger, tamborines and flutes were diſtinguiſhed.

" Oh! Oh! we are near the end of our journey!" ſaid the peaſant; " all this comes from the town we are going to. But what makes them all ſo merry, I wonder!"

Ellena, revived by this intelligence, followed with alacrity the ſudden ſpeed of the Confeſſor; and preſently reaching a point of the mountain, where the woods opened, a cluſter of lights on another ſummit, a little higher, more certainly announced the town.

They ſoon after arrived at the ruinous gates, which had formerly led to a place of ſome ſtrength, and paſſed at once from darkneſs and deſolated walls, into a market-place, blazing with light and reſounding with the multitude. Booths, fantaſtically hung with lamps, and filled with merchandize of every kind, diſpoſed in the gayeſt order, were ſpread on all ſides, and peaſants in their holiday cloaths, and parties of maſks crowded every avenue. Here was a band of muſicians, and there a group of dancers; on one ſpot the *outré* humour of a zanni provoked the never-failing laugh of an Italian rabble, in another the *improviſatore*, by the pathos of his ſtory, and the perſuaſive ſenſibility of his ſtrains, was holding the attention of his auditors, as in the bands of magic. Farther on was a ſtage raiſed for a di-

pla

play of fire-works, and near this a theatre, where a mimic opera, the "ſhadow of a ſhade," was exhibiting, whence the roar of laughter, excited by the principal *buffo* within, mingled with the heterogeneous voices of the venders of ice, maccaroni, ſherbet, and diavoloni, without.

The Confeſſor looked upon this ſcene with diſappointment and ill-humour, and bade the guide go before him, and ſhew the way to the beſt inn; an office which the latter undertook with great glee, though he made his way with difficulty.

"To think I ſhould not know it was the time of the fair!" ſaid he, "though to ſay truth, I never was at it but once in my life, ſo it is not ſo ſurprizing, Signor."

"Make way through the crowd," ſaid Schedoni.

"After jogging on ſo long in the dark, Signor, with nothing at all to be ſeen," continued the man, without attending to the direction, "then to come, all of a ſudden, to ſuch a place as this, why it is like coming out of purgatory into paradiſe! Well! Signor, you have forgot all your quandaries now; you think nothing now about that old ruinous place where we had ſuch a race after the man, that would not murder us; but that ſhot I fired did his buſineſs."

"You fired!" ſaid Schedoni, arouſed by the aſſertion.

"Yes, Signor, as I was looking over your ſhoulder; I ſhould have thought you muſt have heard it!"

"I ſhould have thought ſo, too, friend."

"Aye, Signor, this fine place has put all that out of your head, I warrant, as well as what I ſaid about that ſame fellow; but, indeed Signor, I did not know he was related to you, when I

talked so of him. But, perhaps, for all that, you may not know the piece of his story I was going to tell you, when you cut me off so short, though you are better acquainted with one another than I guessed for; so, when I come in from the fair, Signor, if you please, I will tell it you; and it is a pretty long history, for I happen to know the whole of it; though, where you cut me short, when you was in one of those quandaries, was only just at the beginning, but no matter for that, I can begin it again, for——"

"What is all this!" said Schedoni, again recalled from one of the thoughtful moods in which he had so habitually indulged, that even the bustle around him had failed to interrupt the course of his mind. He now bade the peasant be silent; but the man was too happy to be tractable, and proceeded to express all he felt, as they advanced slowly through the crowd. Every object here was to him new and delightful; and, nothing doubting that it must be equally so to every other person, he was continually pointing out to the proud and gloomy Confessor the trivial subjects of his own admiration. "See! Signor, there is Punchinello, see! how he eats the hot macaroni! And look there, Signor! there is a juggler! O! good Signor, stop one minute, to look at his tricks. See! he has turned a monk into a devil already, in the twinkling of an eye!"

"Silence! and proceed," said Schedoni.

"That is what I say, Signor:—silence! for the people make such a noise that I cannot hear a word you speak.—Silence, there!"

"Considering that you could not hear, you have answered wonderfully to the purpose," said Ellena.

"Ah!

"Ah! Signora! is not this better than thoſe dark woods and hills? But what have we here? Look, Signor, here is a fine ſight!"

The crowd which was aſſembled round a ſtage on which ſome perſons groteſquely dreſſed, were performing, now interrupting all farther progreſs, the travellers were compelled to ſtop at the foot of the platform. The people above were acting what ſeemed to have been intended for a tragedy, but what their ſtrange geſtures, uncouth recitation, and incongruous countenances, had transformed into a comedy.

Schedoni, thus obliged to pauſe, withdrew his attention from the ſcene; Ellena conſented to endure it, and the peaſant, with gaping mouth and ſtaring eyes, ſtood like a ſtatue, yet not knowing whether he ought to laugh or cry, till ſuddenly turning round to the Confeſſor, whoſe horſe was of neceſſity cloſe to his, he ſeized his arm, and pointing to the ſtage, called out, "Look! Signor, ſee! Signor, what a ſcoundrel! what a villain! See! he has murdered his own daughter!"

At theſe terrible words, the indignation of Schedoni was done away by other emotions; he turned his eyes upon the ſtage, and perceived that the actors were performing the ſtory of Virginia. It was at the moment when ſhe was dying in the arms of her father, who was holding up the poniard, with which he had ſtabbed her. The feelings of Schedoni, at this inſtant, inflicted a puniſhment almoſt worthy of the crime he had meditated.

Ellena, ſtruck with the action, and with the contraſt which it ſeemed to offer to what ſhe had believed to have been the late conduct of Schedoni towards herſelf, looked at him with

moſt expreſſive tenderneſs, and as his glance met her's, ſhe perceived, with ſurprize, the changing emotions of his ſoul, and the inexplicable character of his countenance. Stung to the heart, the Confeſſor furiouſly ſpurred his horſe that he might eſcape from the ſcene, but the poor animal was too ſpiritleſs and jaded, to force its way through the crowd; and the peaſant, vexed at being hurried from a place where, almoſt for the firſt time in his life, he was ſuffering under the ſtrange delights of artificial grief, and half angry, to obſerve an animal of which he had the care, ill treated, loudly remonſtrated, and ſeized the bridle of Schedoni, who, ſtill more incenſed, was applying the whip to the ſhoulders of the guide, when the crowd ſuddenly fell back and opened a way through which the travellers paſſed, and arrived, with little further interruption, at the door of the inn.

Schedoni was not in a humour which rendered him fit to encounter difficulties, and ſtill leſs the vulgar ſquabbles of a place already crowded with gueſts; yet it was not without much oppoſition that he at length obtained a lodging for the night. The peaſant was not leſs anxious for the accommodation of his horſes; and, when Ellena heard him declare, that the animal, which the Confeſſor had ſo cruelly ſpurred, ſhould have a double feed, and a bed of ſtraw as high as his head, if he himſelf went without one, ſhe gave him, unnoticed by Schedoni, the only ducat ſhe had left.

CHAP

CHAP. VII.

" But, if you be afraid to hear the worſt,
Then let the worſt, unheard, fall on your head."
SHAKESPEARE.

SCHEDONI paſſed the night without ſleep. The incident of the preceding evening had not only renewed the agonies of remorſe, but excited thoſe of pride and apprehenſion. There was ſomething in the conduct of the peaſant towards him, which he could not clearly underſtand, though his ſuſpicions were ſufficient to throw his mind into a ſtate of the utmoſt perturbation. Under an air of extreme ſimplicity, this man had talked of Spalatro, had diſcovered that he was acquainted with much of his hiſtory, and had hinted that he knew by whom he had been employed; yet at the ſame time appeared unconſcious, that Schedoni's was the maſter-hand, which had directed the principal actions of the ruffian. At other times, his behaviour had ſeemed to contradict the ſuppoſition of his ignorance on this point; from ſome circumſtances he had mentioned, it appeared impoſſible but that he muſt have known who Schedoni really was, and even his own conduct had occaſionally ſeemed to acknowledge this, particularly when, being interrupted in his hiſtory of Spalatro, he attempted an apology, by ſaying, he did not know it concerned Schedoni: nor could the conſcious Schedoni believe that the very pointed manner in which the peaſant had addreſſed him at the re-

preſentation

preſentation of Virginia, was merely accidental. He wiſhed to diſmiſs the man immediately, but it was firſt neceſſary to aſcertain what he knew concerning him, and then to decide on the meaſures to be taken. It was, however, a difficult matter, to obtain this information, without manifeſting an anxiety, which might betray him, if the guide had, at preſent, only a general ſuſpicion of the truth; and no leſs difficult to determine how to proceed towards him, if it ſhould be evident that his ſuſpicions reſted on Spalatro. To take him forward to Naples, was to bring an informer to his home; to ſuffer him to return with his diſcovery, now that he probably knew the place of Schedoni's reſidence, was little leſs hazardous. His death only could ſecure the ſecret.

After a night paſſed in the tumult of ſuch conſiderations, the Confeſſor ſummoned the peaſant to his chamber, and, with ſome ſhort preface, told him he had no further occaſion for his ſervices, adding, careleſsly, that he adviſed him to be on his guard as he re-paſſed the villa, leſt Spalatro, who might yet lurk there, ſhould revenge upon him the injury he had received. "According to your account of him, he is a very dangerous fellow," ſaid Schedoni; "but your information is, perhaps, erroneous."

The guide began, teſtily, to juſtify himſelf for his aſſertions, and the Confeſſor then endeavoured to draw from him what he knew on the ſubject. But, whether the man was piqued by the treatment he had lately received, or had other reaſons for reſerve, he did not at firſt appear ſo willing to communicate as formerly.

"What

"What you hinted of this man," ſaid Schedoni, "has in ſome degree excited my curioſity: I have now a few moments of leiſure, and you may relate, if you will, ſomething of the wonderful hiſtory you talked of."

"It is a long ſtory, Signor, and you would be tired before I got to the end of it," replied the peaſant; "and, craving your pardon, Signor, I don't much like to be ſnapped up ſo!"

"Where did this man live?" ſaid the Confeſſor. "You mentioned ſomething of a houſe at the ſea ſide."

"Aye, Signor, there is a ſtrange hiſtory belonging to that houſe, too; but this man, as I was ſaying, came there all of a ſudden, nobody knew how! and the place had been ſhut up ever ſince the Marcheſe———"

"The Marcheſe!" ſaid Schedoni, coldly, "what Marcheſe, friend?"—"Why, I mean the Baróne di Cambruſca, Signor, to be ſure, as I was going to have told you, of my own accord, if you would only have let me. Shut up ever ſince the Baróne———I left off there, I think."

"I underſtood that the Baróne was dead!" obſerved the Confeſſor.

"Yes, Signor," replied the peaſant, fixing his eyes on Schedoni; "but what has his death to do with what I was telling? This happened before he died."

Schedoni, ſomewhat diſconcerted by this unexpected remark, forgot to reſent the familiarity of it. "This man, then, this Spalatro, was connected with the Baróne di Cambruſca?" ſaid he.

"It was pretty well gueſſed ſo, Signor."

"How! no more than gueſſed?"

"No,

"No, Signor, and that was more than enough for the Baróne's liking, I warrant. He took too much care for any thing certain to appear againſt him, and he was wiſe ſo to do, for if it had—it would have been worſe for him. But I was going to tell you the ſtory, Signor."

"What reaſons were there for believing this was an agent of the Baróne di Cambruſca, friend?"

"I thought you wiſhed to hear the ſtory, Signor."

"In good time; but firſt what were your reaſons?"

"One of them is enough, Signor, and if you would only have let me gone ſtraight on with the ſtory, you would have found it out by this time, Signor."

Schedoni frowned, but did not otherwiſe reprove the impertinence of the ſpeech.

"It was reaſon enough, Signor, to my mind," continued the peaſant, "that it was ſuch a crime as nobody but the Baróne di Cambruſca could have committed; there was nobody wicked enough, in our parts, to have done it but him. Why is not this *reaſon* enough, Signor? What makes you look at me ſo? why the Baróne himſelf could hardly have looked worſe, if I had told him as much!"

"Be leſs prolix," ſaid the Confeſſor, in a reſtrained voice.

"Well then, Signor, to begin at the beginning. It is a good many years ago that Marco came firſt to our town. Now the ſtory goes, that one ſtormy night—"

"You may ſpare yourſelf the trouble of relating the ſtory," ſaid Schedoni, abruptly,

"Did

"Did you ever ſee the Barone you was ſpeaking of, friend?"

"Why did you bid me tell it, Signor, ſince you know it already! I have been here all this while, juſt a-going to begin it, and all for nothing!"

"It is very ſurpriſing," reſumed the artful Schedoni, without having noticed what had been ſaid, "that if this Spalatro was known to be the villain you ſay he is, not any ſtep ſhould have been taken to bring him to juſtice! how happened that? But, perhaps, all this ſtory was nothing more than a report."

"Why, Signor, it was every body's buſineſs, and nobody's, as one may ſay; then, beſides, nobody could prove what they had heard, and though every body believed the ſtory juſt the ſame as if they had ſeen the whole, yet that, they ſaid, would not do in law, but they ſhould be made to prove it. Now, it is not one time in ten that any thing can be proved, Signor, as you well know, yet we none of us believe it the leſs for that!"

"So, then, you would have had this man puniſhed for a murder, which, probably, he never commited!" ſaid the Confeſſor.

"A murder!" repeated the peaſant.

Schedoni was ſilent, but, in the next inſtant, ſaid, "Did you not ſay it was a murder?"

"I have not told you ſo, Signor!"

"What was the crime, then?" reſumed Schedoni, after another momentary pauſe, "you ſaid it was atrocious, and what more ſo than—murder?" His lip quivered as he pronounced the laſt word.

The peaſant made no reply, but remained with his eyes fixed upon the Confeſſor, and, at length,

length, repeated, "Did I ſay it was murder, Signor?'

"If it was not that, ſay what it was," demanded the Confeſſor, haughtily; "but let it be in two words."

"As if a ſtory could be told in two words, Signor!"

"Well, well, be brief."

"How can I Signor, when the ſtory is ſo long!"

"I will waſte no more time," ſaid Schedoni, going.

"Well, Signor, I will do my beſt to make it ſhort. It was one ſtormy night in December, that Marco Torma had been out fiſhing. Marco, Signor, was an old man that lived in our town when I was a boy; I can but juſt remember him, but my father knew him well, and loved old Marco, and uſed often to ſay ——"

"To the ſtory!" ſaid Schedoni.

"Why I am telling it, Signor, as faſt as I can. This old Marco did not live in our town at the time it happened, but in ſome place, I have forgot the name of it, near the ſea ſhore. What can the name be! it is ſomething like ——"

"Well, what happened to this old dotard?"

"You are out there, Signor, he was no old dotard; but you ſhall hear. At that time, Signor, Marco lived in this place that I have forgot the name of, and was a fiſherman, but better times turned up afterwards, but that is neither here nor there. Old Marco had been out fiſhing; it was a ſtormy night, and he was glad enough to get on ſhore, I warrant. It was quite dark, as dark, Signor, I ſuppoſe, as it was laſt night, and he was making the beſt of his way,

way, Signor, with ſome fiſh along the ſhore, but it being ſo dark, he loſt it notwithſtanding. The rain beat, and the wind blew, and he wandered about a long while, and could ſee no light, nor hear any thing, but the ſurge near him, which ſometimes ſeemed as if it was coming to waſh him away. He got as far off it as he could, but he knew there were high rocks over the beach, and he was afraid he ſhould run his head againſt them, if he went too far, I ſuppoſe. However, at laſt, he went up cloſe to them, and as he got a little ſhelter, he reſolved to try no further for the preſent. I tell it you, Signor, juſt as my father told it me, and he had it from the old man himſelf."

"You need not be ſo particular," replied the Confeſſor; "ſpeak to the point."

"Well, Signor, as old Marco lay ſnug under the rocks, he thought he heard ſomebody coming, and he lifted up his head, I warrant, poor old ſoul! as if he could have ſeen who it was; however, he could hear, though it was ſo dark, and he heard the ſteps coming on; but he ſaid nothing yet, meaning to let them come cloſe up to him, before he diſcovered himſelf. Preſently he ſees a little moving light, and it comes nearer and nearer, till it was juſt oppoſite to him, and then he ſaw the ſhadow of a man on the ground, and then ſpied the man himſelf, with a dark lanthorn, paſſing along the beach."

"Well, well, to the purpoſe," ſaid Schedoni.

"Old Marco, Signor, my father ſays, was never ſtout hearted, and he took it into his head this might be a robber, becauſe he had the lanthorn, though, for that matter, he would have been

been glad enough of a lanthorn himſelf, and ſo he lay quiet. But, preſently, he was in a rare fright, for the man ſtopped to reſt the load he had upon his back, on a piece of rock near him, and old Marco ſaw him throw off a heavy ſack, and heard him breathe hard, as if he was hugely tired. I tell it, Signor, juſt as my father does."

"What was in the ſack?" ſaid Schedoni, coolly.

"All in good time, Signor;" perhaps old Marco never found out; but you ſhall hear. He was afraid, when he ſaw the ſack, to ſtir a limb, for he thought it held booty. But, preſently, the man, without ſaying a word, heaved it on his ſhoulders again, and ſtaggered away with it along the beach, and Marco ſaw no more of him."

"Well! what has he to do with your ſtory, then?" ſaid the Confeſſor, "Was this Spalatro?"

"All in good time, Signor; you put me out. When the ſtorm was down a little, Marco crept out, and thinking there muſt be a village, or a hamlet, or a cottage, at no great diſtance, ſince this man had paſſed, he thought he would try a little further. He had better have ſtaid where he was, for he wandered about a long while, and could ſee nothing, and what was worſe, the ſtorm came on louder than before, and he had no rocks to ſhelter him now. While he was in this quandary, he ſees a light at a diſtance, and it came into his head this might be the lantern again, but he determined to go on notwithſtanding, for if it was, he could ſtop ſhort, and if it was not, he

he ſhould get ſhelter, perhaps; ſo on he went, and I ſuppoſe I ſhould have done the ſame, Signor."

"Well! this hiſtory never will have an end!" ſaid Schedoni.

"Well! Signor, he had not gone far when he found out that it was no lanthorn, but a light at a window. When he came up to the houſe he knocked ſoftly at the door, but nobody came."

"What houſe?" inquired the Confeſſor, ſharply.

"The rain beat hard, Signor, and I warrant poor old Marco waited a long time before he knocked again, for he was main patient, Signor. O! how I have ſeen him liſten to a ſtory, let it be ever ſo long!"

"I have need of his patience!" ſaid Schedoni.

"When he knocked again, Signor, the door gave way a little, and he found it was open, and ſo, as nobody came, he thought fit to walk in of his own accord."

"The dotard! what buſineſs had he to be ſo curious?" exclaimed Schedoni.

"Curious! Signor, he only ſought ſhelter! He ſtumbled about in the dark, for a good while, and could find nobody, nor make nobody hear, but, at laſt, he came to a room where there was ſome fire not quite out, upon the hearth, and he went up to it, to warm himſelf, till ſomebody ſhould come."

"What! was there nobody in the houſe?" ſaid the Confeſſor.

"You ſhall hear, Signor. He had not been there, he ſaid, no, he was ſure, not above two minutes, when he heard a ſtrange ſort of a noiſe in

in the very room where he was, but the fire gave ſuch a poor light, he could not ſee whether any body was there."

"What was the noiſe?"

"You put me out, Signor. He ſaid he did not much like it, but what could he do! So he ſtirred up the fire, and tried to make it blaze a little, but it was as duſky as ever; he could ſee nothing. Preſently, however, he heard ſomebody coming, and ſaw a light, and then a man coming towards the room where he was, ſo he went up to him to aſk ſhelter."

"Who was this man?" ſaid Schedoni.

"Aſk ſhelter. He ſays the man, when he came to the door of the room, turned as white as a ſheet, as well he might, to ſee a ſtranger, to find a ſtranger there, at that time of the night. I ſuppoſe I ſhould have done the ſame myſelf. The man did not ſeem very willing to let him ſtay, but aſked what he did there, and ſuch like; but the ſtorm was very loud, and ſo Marco did not let a little matter daunt him, and, when he ſhewed the man what fine fiſh he had in his baſket, and ſaid he was welcome to it, he ſeemed more willing."

"Incredible!" exclaimed Schedoni, "the blockhead!"

"He had wit enough for that matter, Signor; Marco ſays he appeared to be main hungry—"

"Is that any proof of his wit?" ſaid the Confeſſor, peeviſhly.

"You never will let me finiſh, Signor; main hungry; for he put more wood on the fire directly, to dreſs ſome of the fiſh. While he was doing this, Marco ſays his heart, ſomehow, miſgave him, that this was the man he ſaw on the beach, and he looked at him pretty hard, till the other aſked

aſked him, croſsly, what he ſtared at him ſo for; but Marco took care not to tell. While he was buſy making ready the fiſh, however, Marco had an opportunity of eying him the more, and every time the man looked round the room, which happened to be pretty often, he had a notion it was the ſame."

"Well, and if it was the ſame," ſaid Schedoni.

"But when Marco happened to ſpy the ſack, lying in a corner, he had no doubt about the matter. He ſays his heart then miſgave him ſadly, and he wiſhed himſelf ſafe out of the houſe, and determined, in his own mind, to get away as ſoon as he could, without letting the man ſuſpect what he thought of him. He now gueſſed, too, what made the man look round the room ſo often, and, though Marco thought before it was to find out if he had brought any body with him, he now believed it was to ſee whether his treaſure was ſafe."

"Aye, likely enough," obſerved Schedoni.

"Well, old Marco ſat not much at his eaſe, while the fiſh was preparing, and thought it was 'out of the fryingpan into the fire' with him; but what could he do?"

"Why get up and walk away, to be ſure," ſaid the Confeſſor, "as I ſhall do, if your ſtory laſts much longer."

"You ſhall hear, Signor; he would have done ſo, if he had thought this man would have let him, but——"

"Well, this man was Spalatro, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Schedoni, impatiently, "and this was the houſe on the ſhore you formerly mentioned."

"How

" How well you have guefſed it, Signor; though to ſay truth, I have been expecting you to find it out for this half hour."

Schedoni did not like the ſignificant look, which the peaſant aſſumed while he ſaid this, but he bade him proceed.

" At firſt, Signor, Spalatro hardly ſpoke a word, but he came to by degrees, and by the time the fiſh was nearly ready, he was talkative enough."

Here the Confeſſor roſe, with ſome emotion, and paced the room.

" Poor old Marco, Signor, began to think better of him, and when he heard the rain at the caſements, he was loath to think of ſtirring. Preſently Spalatro went out of the room for a plate to eat the fiſh on.———"

" Out of the room?" ſaid Schedoni, and checked his ſteps.

" Yes, Signor, but he took care to carry the light with him. However, Marco, who had a deal of curioſity to———"

" Yes, he appears to have had a great deal, indeed!" ſaid the Confeſſor, and turning away, renewed his pace.

" Nay, Signor, I am not come to that yet, he has ſhewn none yet;—a great deal of curioſity to know what was in the ſack, before he conſented to let himſelf ſtay much longer, thought this a good opportunity for looking, and as the fire was now pretty bright, he determined to ſee. He went up to the ſack, therefore, Signor, and tried to lift it, but it was too heavy for him though it did not ſeem full."

Schedoni again checked his ſteps, and ſtood fixed before the peaſant.

" He

" He raiſed it, however, a little, Signor, but it fell from his hands, and with ſuch a heavy weight upon the floor, that he was ſure it held no common booty. Juſt then, he ſays, he thought he heard Spalatro coming, and the ſound of the ſack was enough to have frightened him, and ſo Marco quitted it; but he was miſtaken, and he went to it again. But you don't ſeem to hear me, Signor, for you look as you do when you are in thoſe quandaries, ſo buſy a-thinking, and I———"

" Proceed," ſaid Schedoni, ſternly, and renewed his ſteps, " I hear you."

" Went to it again,"—reſumed the peaſant, cautiouſly taking up the ſtory at the laſt words he had dropped. " He untied the ſtring, Signor, that held the ſack, and opened the cloth a little way, but think, Signor, what he muſt have thought, when he felt — cold fleſh! O, Signor! and when he ſaw by the light of the fire, the face of a corpſe within! O, Signor!"—

The peaſant, in the eagerneſs with which he related this circumſtance, had followed Schedoni to the other end of the chamber, and he now took hold of his garment, as if to ſecure his attention to the remainder of the ſtory. The Confeſſor, however, continued his ſteps, and the peaſant kept pace with him, ſtill looſely holding his garment.

" Marco," he reſumed, " was ſo terrified, as my father ſays, that he hardly knew where he was, and I warrant, if one could have ſeen him, he looked as white, Signor, as you do now."

The Confeſſor abruptly withdrew his garment from the peaſant's graſp, and ſaid, in an inward voice, " If I am ſhocked at the mere mention of ſuch a ſpectacle, no wonder he was, who beheld it!" After the pauſe of a moment, he added,— " But what followed?"

" Marco

" Marco ſays he had no power to tie up the cloth again, Signor, and when he came to his thoughts, his only fear was, leſt Spalatro ſhould return, though he had hardly been gone a minute, before he could get out of the houſe, for he cared nothing about the ſtorm now. And ſure enough he heard him coming, but he managed to get out of the room, into a paſſage another way from that Spalatro was in. And luckily, too, it was the ſame paſſage he had come in by, and it led him out of the houſe. He made no more ado, but ran ſtraight off, without ſtopping to chuſe which way, and many perils and dangers he got into among the woods, that night, and—"

" How happened it, that this Spalatro was not taken up, after this diſcovery?" ſaid Schedoni. " What was the conſequence of it?"

" Why, Signor, old Marco had like to have caught his death that night; what with the wet, and what with the fright, he was laid up with a fever, and was light-headed, and raved of ſuch ſtrange things, that people would not believe any thing he ſaid when he came to his ſenſes."

" Aye," ſaid Schedoni, " the narrative reſembles a delirious dream, more than a reality; I perfectly accord with them in their opinion of this feveriſh old man."

" But you ſhall hear, Signor; after a while they began to think better of it, and there was ſome ſtir made about it; but what could poor folks do, for nothing could be proved! The houſe was ſearched, but the man was gone, and nothing could be found! From that time the place was ſhut up; till many years after, this Spalatro appeared, and old Marco then ſaid he was pretty ſure he was the man, but he could not ſwear it, and ſo nothing could be done."

" Then

" Then it appears, after all, that you are not certain that this long hiſtory belongs to this Spalatro!" ſaid the Confeſſor; " nay, not even that the hiſtory itſelf is any thing more than the viſion of a diſtempered brain!"

" I do not know, Signor, what you may call certain; but I know what we all believe. But the ſtrangeſt part of the ſtory is to come yet, and that which nobody would believe, hardly, if—."

" I have heard enough," ſaid Schedoni, " I will hear no more!"

" Well but, Signor, I have not told you half yet; and I am ſure when I heard it myſelf, it ſo terrified me."

" I have liſtened too long to this idle hiſtory," ſaid the Confeſſor, " there ſeems to be no rational foundation for it. Here is what I owe you; you may depart."

" Well, Signor, 'tis plain you know the reſt already, or you never would go without it. But you don't know, perhaps, Signor, what an unaccountable—I am ſure it made my hair ſtand on end to hear of it, what an unaccountable———"

" I will hear no more of this abſurdity," interrupted Schedoni, with ſternneſs. " I reproach myſelf for having liſtened ſo long to ſuch a goſſip's tale, and have no further curioſity concerning it. You may withdraw; and bid the hoſt attend me."

" Well, Signor, if you are ſo eaſily ſatisfied," replied the peaſant, with diſappointment, " there is no more to be ſaid, but———"

" You may ſtay, however, while I caution you," ſaid Schedoni, " how you paſs the villa, where this Spalatro may yet linger, for, though I can only ſmile at the ſtory you have related———"

" Related, Signor! why I have not told it half; and if you would only pleaſe to be patient—— "

" Though I can only ſmile at that ſimple narrative,"——repeated Schedoni in a louder tone.

" Nay, Signor, for that matter, you can frown at it too, as I can teſtify," muttered the guide.

" Liſten to me!" ſaid the Confeſſor, in a yet more inſiſting voice. " I ſay, that though I give no credit to your curious hiſtory, I think this ſame Spalatro appears to be a deſperate fellow, and, therefore, I would have you be on your guard. If you ſee him, you may depend upon it, that he will attempt your life in revenge of the injury I have done him. I give you, therefore, in addition to your trombone, this ſtiletto to defend you."

Schedoni, while he ſpoke, took an inſtrument from his boſom, but it was not the one he uſually wore, or, at leaſt, that he was ſeen to wear. He delivered it to the peaſant, who received it with a kind of ſtupid ſurpriſe, and then gave him ſome directions as to the way in which it ſhould be managed.

" Why, Signor," ſaid the man, who had liſtened with much attention, " I am kindly obliged to you for thinking about me, but is there any thing in this ſtiletto different from others, that it is to be uſed ſo?"

Schedoni looked gravely at the peaſant for an inſtant, and then replied, " Certainly not, friend, I would only inſtruct you to uſe it to the beſt advantage;— farewell!"

" Thank you kindly, Signor, but—but I think I have no need of it, my trombone is enough for me."

" This

" This will defend you more adroitly," replied Schedoni, refuſing to take back the ſtiletto, " and moreover, while you were loading the trombone, your adverſary might uſe his poniard to advantage. Keep it, therefore, friend; it will protect you better than a dozen trombones. Put it up."

Perhaps it was Schedoni's particular look, more than his argument, that convinced the guide of the value of his gift; he received it ſubmiſſively, though with a ſtare of ſtupid ſurpriſe; probably it had been better, if it had been ſuſpicious ſurpriſe. He thanked Schedoni again, and was leaving the room, when the Confeſſor called out, " Send the landlord to me immediately, I ſhall ſet off for Rome without delay!"

" Yes, Signor," replied the peaſant, " you are at the right place, the road parts here; but I thought you was going for Naples!"

" For Rome," ſaid Schedoni.

" For Rome, Signor! Well, I hope you will get ſafe, Signor, with all my heart!" ſaid the guide, and quitted the chamber.

While this dialogue had been paſſing between Schedoni and the peaſant, Ellena, in ſolitude, was conſidering on the means of prevailing with the Confeſſor to allow her to return either to Altieri, or to the neighbouring cloiſter of " *Our Lady of Pity*," inſtead of placing her at a diſtance from Naples, till he ſhould think proper to acknowledge her. The plan, which he had mentioned, ſeemed to her long-harraſſed mind to exile her forever from happineſs, and all that was dear to her affections; it appeared like a ſecond baniſhment to San Stefano, and every abbeſs, except that of the *Santa della Pieta*, came to her imagination in the portraiture of an inexorable jailor. While this

ſubject engaged her, ſhe was ſummoned to attend Schedoni, whom ſhe found impatient to enter the carriage, which at this town they had been able to procure. Ellena, on looking out for the guide, was informed that he had already ſet off for his home, a circumſtance, for the ſuddenneſs of which ſhe knew not how to account.

The travellers immediately proceeded on their journey; Schedoni, reflecting on the late converſation, ſaid little, and Ellena read not in his countenance any thing that might encourage her to introduce the ſubject of her own intended ſolicitation. Thus ſeparately occupied, they advanced, during ſome hours, on the road to Naples, for thither Schedoni had deſigned to go, notwithſtanding his late aſſertion to the guide, whom it appears, for whatever reaſon, he was anxious to deceive, as to the place of his actual reſidence.

They ſtopped to dine at a town of ſome conſideration, and, when Ellena heard the Confeſſor inquire concerning the numerous convents it contained, ſhe perceived that it was neceſſary for her no longer to defer her petition. She therefore repreſented immediately what muſt be the forlornneſs of her ſtate, and the anxiety of her mind, if ſhe were placed at a diſtance from the ſcenes and the people, which affection and early habit ſeemed to have conſecrated; eſpecially at this time, when her ſpirits had ſcarcely recovered from the ſevere preſſure of long ſuffering, and when to ſoothe and renovate them, not only quiet, but the conſciouſneſs of ſecurity, were neceſſary; a conſciouſneſs which it was impoſſible, and eſpecially ſo after her late experience, that ſhe could acquire among ſtrangers, till they ſhould ceaſe to be ſuch.

To theſe pleadings Schedoni thoughtfully attended, but the darkneſs of his aſpect did not indicate that his compaſſion was touched; and Ellena proceeded to repreſent, ſecondly, that which, had ſhe been more artful, or leſs diſdainful of cunning, ſhe would have urged the firſt. As it was, ſhe had begun with the mention of circumſtances, which, though the leaſt likely to prevail with Schedoni, ſhe felt to be moſt important to herſelf and ſhe concluded with repreſenting that, which was moſt intereſting to him. Ellena ſuggeſted, that her reſidence in the neighbourhood of Altieri might be ſo managed, as that his ſecret would be as effectually preſerved, as if ſhe were at an hundred miles from Naples.

It may appear extraordinary, that a man of Schedoni's habitual coolneſs, and exact calculation, ſhould have ſuffered fear, on this occaſion, to obſcure his perceptions; and this inſtance ſtrongly proved the magnitude of the cauſe, which could produce ſo powerful an effect. While he now liſtened to Ellena, he began to perceive circumſtances that had eluded his own obſervation; and he, at length, acknowledged, that it might be ſafer to permit her to return to the Villa Altieri, and that ſhe ſhould from thence go, as ſhe had formerly intended, to the *Santa della Pieta*, than to place her in any convent, however remote, where it would be neceſſary for himſelf to introduce her. His only remaining objection to the neighbourhood of Naples, now reſted on the chance it would offer the Marcheſa di Vivaldi of diſcovering Ellena's abode, before he ſhould judge it convenient to diſcloſe to her his family; and his knowledge of the Marcheſa juſtified his moſt

horrible ſuſpicion, as to the conſequence of ſuch a premature diſcovery.

Something, however, it appeared, muſt be riſked in any ſituation he might chuſe for Ellena; and her reſidence at the *Santa della Pieta*, a large convent, well ſecured, and where, as ſhe had been known to them from her infancy, the abbeſs and the ſiſters might be ſuppoſed to be not indifferent concerning her welfare, ſeemed to promiſe ſecurity againſt any actual violence from the malice of the Marcheſa; againſt her artful duplicity every place would be almoſt equally inſufficient. Here, as Ellena would appear in the character ſhe had always been known in, no curioſity could be excited, or ſuſpicion awakened, as to her family; and here, therefore, Schedoni's ſecret would more probably be preſerved, than elſewhere. As this was, after all, the predominant ſubject of his anxiety, to which, however unnatural it may ſeem, even the ſafety of Ellena was ſecondary, he finally determined, that ſhe ſhould return to the *Santa della Pieta;* and ſhe thanked him almoſt with tears, for a conſent which ſhe received ae a generous indulgence, but which was in reality little more than an effect of ſelfiſh apprehenſion.

The remainder of the journey, which was of ſome days, paſſed without any remarkable occurrence: Schedoni, with only ſhort intervals, was ſtill enveloped in gloom and ſilence; and Ellena, with thoughts engaged by the one ſubject of her intereſt, the preſent ſituation and circumſtances of Vivaldi, willingly ſubmitted to this prolonged ſtillneſs.

As, at length, ſhe drew near Naples, her emotions became more various and powerful; and, when

when ſhe diſtinguiſhed the top of Veſuvius peering over every intervening ſummit, ſhe wept as her imagination charactered all the well-known country it overlooked. But when, having reached an eminence, that ſcenery was exhibited to her ſenſes, when the Bay of Naples, ſtretching into remoteſt diſtance, was ſpread out before her; when every mountain of that magnificent horizon, which encloſed her native landſcape, that country which ſhe believed Vivaldi to inhabit, ſtood unfolded, how affecting, how overwhelming were her ſenſations! Every object ſeemed to ſpeak of her home, of Vivaldi, and of happineſs that was paſſed! and ſo exquiſitely did regret mingle with hope, the tender grief of remembrance with the intereſt of expectation, that it were difficult to ſay which prevailed.

Her expreſſive countenance diſcloſed to the Confeſſor the courſe of her thoughts and of her feelings, feelings which, while he contemned, he believed he perfectly comprehended, but of which, having never in any degree experienced them, he really underſtood nothing. The callous Schedoni, by a miſtake not uncommon, eſpecially to a mind of his character, ſubſtituted words for truths; not only confounding the limits of neighbouring qualities, but miſtaking their very principles. Incapable of perceiving their nice diſtinctions, he called the perſons who ſaw them, merely fanciful; thus making his very incapacity an argument for his ſuperior wiſdom. And, while he confounded delicacy of feeling with fatuity of mind, taſte with caprice, and imagination with error, he yielded, when he moſt congratulated himſelf on his ſagacity, to illuſions not leſs egregious, becauſe they were leſs brilliant, than

thoſe which are incident to ſentiment and feeling.

The better to eſcape obſervation, Schedoni had contrived not to reach Naples till the cloſe of evening, and it was entirely dark before the carriage ſtopped at the gate of the Villa Altieri. Ellena, with a mixture of melancholy and ſatisfaction, viewed, once more, her long-deſerted home, and while ſhe waited till a ſervant ſhould open the gate, remembered how often ſhe had thus waited when there was a beloved friend within, to welcome her with ſmiles, which were now gone for ever. Beatrice, the old houſekeeper, at length, however, appeared, and received her with an affection as ſincere, if not as ſtrong, as that of the relative for whom ſhe mourned.

Here Schedoni alighted, and, having diſmiſſed the carriage, entered the houſe, for the purpoſe of relinquiſhing alſo his diſguiſe, and reſuming his monk's habit. Before he departed, Ellena ventured to mention Vivaldi, and to expreſs her wiſh to hear of his exact ſituation; but, though Schedoni was too well enabled to inform her of it, the policy which had hitherto kept him ſilent on this ſubject ſtill influenced him; and he replied only, that if he ſhould happen to learn the circumſtances of his condition, ſhe ſhould not remain ignorant of them.

This aſſurance revived Ellena, for two reaſons; it afforded her a hope of relief from her preſent uncertainty, and it alſo ſeemed to expreſs an approbation of the object of her affection, ſuch as the Confeſſor had never yet diſcloſed. Schedoni added, that he ſhould ſee her no more, till he thought proper to acknowledge

ledge her for his daughter; but that, if circumſtances made it neceſſary, he ſhould, in the mean time, write to her; and he now gave her a direction by which to addreſs him under a fictitious name, and at a place remote from his convent. Ellena, though aſſured of the neceſſity for this conduct, could not yield to ſuch diſguiſe, without an averſion that was ſtrongly expreſſed in her manner, but of which Schedoni took no notice. He bade her, as ſhe valued her exiſtence, watchfully to preſerve the ſecret of her birth; and to waſte not a ſingle day at Villa Altieri, but to retire to the *Santa della Pieta*; and theſe injunctions were delivered in a manner ſo ſolemn and energetic, as not only deeply to impreſs upon her mind the neceſſity of fulfilling them, but to excite ſome degree of amazement.

After a ſhort and general direction reſpecting her further conduct, Schedoni bade her farewell, and, privately quitting the villa, in his eccleſiaſtical dreſs, repaired to the Dominican convent, which he entered as a brother returned from a diſtant pilgrimage. He was received as uſual by the ſociety, and found himſelf, once more, the auſtere father Schedoni of the Spirito Santo.

The cauſe of his firſt anxiety was the neceſſity for juſtifying himſelf to the Marcheſa di Vivaldi, for aſcertaining how much he might venture to reveal of the truth, and for eſtimating what would be her deciſion, were ſhe informed of the whole. His ſecond ſtep would be to obtain the releaſe of Vivaldi; and, as his conduct in this inſtance would be regulated, in a great degree, by the reſult of his conference with the Marcheſa, it would be only the ſecond. However pain-

ful it muſt be to Schedoni to meet her, now that he had diſcovered the depth of the guilt, in which ſhe would have involved him, he determined to ſeek this eventful conference on the following morning: and he paſſed this night partly in uneaſy expectation of the approaching day, but chiefly in inventing circumſtances, and arranging arguments, that might bear him triumphantly towards the accompliſhment of his grand deſign.

CHAP. VIII.

" Beneath the ſilent gloom of Solitude
Tho' Peace can ſit and ſmile, tho' meek Content
Can keep the chearful tenor of her ſoul,
Ev'n in the loneliеſt ſhades, yet let not Wrath
Approach, let black Revenge keep far aloof,
Or ſoon they flame to madneſs."

EDFRIDA.

SCHEDONI, on his way to the Vivaldi palace, again reviewed and arranged every argument, or rather ſpecious circumſtance, which might induce the Marcheſa's conſent to the nuptials he ſo much deſired. His family was noble, though no longer wealthy, and he believed that as the ſeeming want of deſcent had hitherto been the chief objection to Ellena, the Marcheſa might be prevailed with to overlook the wreck of his fortune.

At

At the palace he was told, that the Marcheſa was at one of her villas on the bay; and he was too anxious not to follow her thither immediately. This delightful reſidence was ſituated on an airy promontory, that overhung the water, and was nearly emboſomed among the woods, that ſpread far along the heights, and deſcended, with great pomp of foliage and colouring, to the very margin ofthe waves. It ſeemed ſcarcely poſſible that miſery could inhabit ſo enchanting an abode; yet the Marcheſa was wretched amidſt all theſe luxuries of nature and art, which would have perfected the happineſs of an innocent mind. Her heart was poſſeſs'd by evil paſſions, and all her perceptions were diſtorted and diſcoloured by them, which, like a dark magician, had power to change the faireſt ſcenes into thoſe of gloom and deſolation.

The ſervants had orders to admit father Schedoni at all times, and he was ſhewn into a ſaloon in which the Marcheſa was alone. Every object in this apartment announced taſte, and even magnificence. The hangings were of purple and gold; the vaulted ceiling was deſigned by one of the firſt painters of the Venetian ſchool; the marble ſtatues that adorned the receſſes were not leſs exquiſite, and the whole ſymmetry and architecture airy, yet rich; gay, yet chaſtened; reſembled the palace of a fairy, and ſeemed to poſſeſs almoſt equal faſcinations. The lattices were thrown open, to admit the proſpect, as well as the air loaded with fragrance from an orangery, that ſpread before them. Lofty palms and plantains threw their green and refreſhing tint over the windows, and on the lawn that ſloped to the edge of the precipice, a ſhadowy perſpective, beyond which appeared the ample wa-

ters

ters of the gulf, where the light ſails of feluccas, and the ſpreading canvas of larger veſſels, glided upon the ſcene and paſſed away, as in a camera obſcura. Veſuvius and the city of Naples were ſeen on the coaſt beyond, with many a bay and lofty cape of that long tract of bold and gaily-coloured ſcenery, which extends towards Cape Campanella, crowned by fading ranges of mountains, lighted up with all the magic of Italian ſunſhine. The Marcheſa reclined on a ſofa before an open lattice; her eyes were fixed upon the proſpect without, but her attention was wholly occupied by the viſions that evil paſſions painted to her imagination. On her ſtill beautiful features was the languor of diſcontent and indiſpoſition; and, though her manners, like her dreſs, diſplayed the elegant negligence of the graces, they concealed the movements of a careful, and even a tortured heart. On perceiving Schedoni, a faint ſmile lightened upon her countenance, and ſhe held forth her hand to him; at the touch of which he ſhuddered.

"My good father, I rejoice to ſee you," ſaid the Marcheſa; "I have felt the want of your converſation much, and at this moment of indiſpoſition eſpecially."

She waved the attendant to withdraw; while Schedoni, ſtalking to a window, could with difficulty conceal the perturbation with which he now, for the firſt time, conſciouſly beheld the willing deſtroyer of his child. Some farther compliment from the Marcheſa recalled him; he ſoon recovered all his addreſs, and approaching her, ſaid,

"Daughter! you always ſend me away a worſe Dominican than I come; I approach you with humility, but depart elated with pride, and

am obliged to ſuffer much from ſelf-infliction before I can deſcend to my proper level."

After ſome other flatteries had been exchanged, a ſilence of ſeveral moments followed, during which neither of the parties ſeemed to have ſufficient courage to introduce the ſubjects that engaged their thoughts, ſubjects upon which their intereſts were now ſo directly and unexpectedly oppoſite. Had Schedoni been leſs occupied by his own feelings, he might have perceived the extreme agitation of the Marcheſa, the tremor of her nerves, the faint fluſh that croſſed her cheek, the wanneſs that ſucceeded, the languid movement of her eyes, and the laborious ſighs that interrupted her breathing, while ſhe wiſhed, yet dared not aſk, whether Ellena was no more, and averted her regards from him, whom ſhe almoſt believed to be a murderer.

Schedoni, not leſs affected, though apparently tranquil, as ſedulouſly avoided the face of the Marcheſa, whom he conſidered with a degree of contempt almoſt equal to his indignation: his feelings had reverſed, for the preſent, all his opinions on the ſubject of their former arguments, and had taught him, for once, to think juſtly. Every moment of ſilence now encreaſed his embarraſſment, and his reluctance even to name Ellena. He feared to tell that ſhe lived, yet deſpiſed himſelf for ſuffering ſuch fear, and ſhuddered at a recollection of the conduct, which had made any aſſurance concerning her life neceſſary. The inſinuations, that he had diſcovered her family to be ſuch as would not degrade that of the Marcheſa, he knew not how to introduce with ſuch delicacy of gradation as might win upon the jealouſy of her pride, and ſoothe her diſappointment;

ment; and he was ſtill meditating how he might lead to this ſubject, when the Marcheſa herſelf broke the ſilence.

"Father," ſhe ſaid, with a ſigh, "I always look to you for conſolation, and am ſeldom diſappointed. You are too well acquainted with the anxiety which has long oppreſſed me; may I underſtand that the cauſe of it is removed?" She pauſed, and then added, "May I hope that my ſon will no longer be led from the obſervance of his duty?"

Schedoni, with his eyes fixed on the ground, remained ſilent, but, at length, ſaid, "The chief occaſion of your anxiety is certainly removed;"—and he was again ſilent.

"How!" exclaimed the Marcheſa, with the quick-ſightedneſs of ſuſpicion, while all her diſſimulation yielded to the urgency of her fear, "Have you failed? Is ſhe not dead?"

In the earneſtneſs of the queſtion, ſhe fixed her eyes on Schedoni's face, and, perceiving there ſymptoms of extraordinary emotion, added, "Relieve me from my apprehenſions, good father, I entreat; tell me that you have ſucceeded, and that ſhe has paid the debt of juſtice."

Schedoni raiſed his eyes to the Marcheſa, but inſtantly averted them; indignation had lifted them, and diſguſt and ſtifled horror turned them away. Though very little of theſe feelings appeared, the Marcheſa perceived ſuch expreſſion as ſhe had never been accuſtomed to obſerve in his countenance; and, her ſurprize and impatience encreaſing, ſhe once more repeated the queſtion, and with a yet more deciſive air than before.

"I have

"I have not failed in the grand object," replied Schedoni: "your ſon is no longer in danger of forming a diſgraceful alliance."

"In what, then, have you failed?" aſked the Marcheſa; "for I perceive that you have not been completely ſucceſsful."

"I ought not to ſay that I have failed in any reſpect," replied Schedoni, with emotion, "ſince the honour of your houſe is preſerved, and —— a life is ſpared."

His voice faultered as he pronounced the laſt words, and he ſeemed to experience again the horror of that moment, when, with an uplifted poniard in his graſp, he had diſcovered Ellena for his daughter.

"Spared!" repeated the Marcheſa, doubtingly; "explain yourſelf, good father!"

"She lives," replied Schedoni; "but you have nothing, therefore, to apprehend."

The Marcheſa, ſurprized no leſs by the tone in which he ſpoke, than ſhocked at the purport of his words, changed countenance, while ſhe ſaid, impatiently—"You ſpeak in enigmas, father."

"Lady! I ſpeak plain truth—ſhe lives."

"I underſtand that ſufficiently," ſaid the Marcheſa; "but when you tell me, I have nothing to apprehend——"

"I tell you truth, alſo," rejoined the Confeſſor; "and the benevolence of your nature may be permitted to rejoice, for juſtice no longer has forbade the exerciſe of mercy."

"This is all very well in its place," ſaid the Marcheſa, betrayed by the vexation ſhe ſuffered; "ſuch ſentiments and ſuch compliments are like gala ſuits, to be put on in fine weather. My day is cloudy; let me have a little plain ſtrong ſenſe: inform me of the circumſtances which have occaſioned

caſioned this change in the courſe of your obſervations, and, good father! be brief."

Schedoni then unfolded, with his uſual art, ſuch circumſtances relative to the family of Ellena as he hoped would ſoften the averſion of the Marcheſa to the connection, and incline her in conſideration of her ſon's happineſs, finally to approve it; with which diſcloſure he mingled a plauſible relation of the way, in which the diſcovery had been made.

The Marcheſa's patience would ſcarcely await the concluſion of his narrative, or her diſappointment ſubmit to the curb of diſcretion. When, at length, he had finiſhed his hiſtory, "Is it poſſible," ſaid ſhe, with fretful diſpleaſure, "that you have ſuffered yourſelf to be deceived by the plauſibility of a girl, who might have been expected to utter any falſhood, which ſhould appear likely to protect her! Has a man of your diſcernment given faith to the idle and improbable tale! Say, rather, father, that your reſolution failed in the critical moment, and that you are now anxious to form excuſes to yourſelf for a conduct ſo puſillanimous."

"I am not apt to give an eaſy faith to appearances," replied Schedoni, gravely, "and ſtill leſs, to ſhrink from the performance of any act, which I judge to be neceſſary and juſt. To the laſt intimation, I make no reply; it does not become my character to vindicate myſelf from an implication of falſhood."

The Marcheſa, perceiving that her paſſion had betrayed her into imprudence, condeſcended to apologize for that which ſhe termed an effect of her extreme anxiety, as to what might follow from an act of ſuch indiſcreet indulgence; and

Schedoni

Schedoni as willingly accepted the apology, each believing the aſſiſtance of the other neceſſary to ſucceſs.

Schedoni then informed her, that he had better authority for what he had advanced than the aſſertion of Ellena; and he mentioned ſome circumſtances, which proved him to be more anxious for the reputation than for the truth of his word. Believing that his origin was entirely unknown to the Marcheſa, he ventured to diſcloſe ſome particulars of Ellena's family, without apprehending that it could lead to a ſuſpicion of his own.

The Marcheſa, though neither appeaſed or convinced, commanded her feelings ſo far as to appear tranquil, while the Confeſſor repreſented, with the moſt delicate addreſs, the unhappineſs of her ſon, and the ſatisfaction, which muſt finally reſult to herſelf from an acquieſcence with his choice, ſince the object of it was known to be worthy of his alliance. He added, that while he had believed the contrary, he had proved himſelf as ſtrenuous to prevent, as he was now ſincere in approving their marriage; and concluded with gently blaming her for ſuffering prejudice and ſome remains of reſentment to obſcure her excellent underſtanding. "Truſting to the natural clearneſs of your perceptions," he added, "I doubt not that when you have maturely conſidered the ſubject, every objection will yield to a conſideration of your ſon's happineſs."

The earneſtneſs, with which Schedoni pleaded for Vivaldi, excited ſome ſurprize; but the Marcheſa, without condeſcending to reply either to his argument or remonſtrance, inquired whether Ellena had a ſuſpicion of the deſign, with which

which ſhe had been carried into the foreſts of the Garganus, or concerning the identity of her perſecutor. Schedoni immediately perceiving to what theſe queſtions tended, replied, with the facility with which he uſually accommodated his conſcience to his intereſt, that Ellena was totally ignorant as to who were her immediate perſecutors, and equally unſuſpicious of any other evil having been intended her, than that of a temporary confinement.

The laſt aſſertion was admitted by the Marcheſa to be probable, till the boldneſs of the firſt made her doubt the truth of each, and occaſioned her new ſurprize and conjecture as to the motive, which could induce Schedoni to venture theſe untruths. She then inquired where Ellena was now diſpoſed of, but he had too much prudence to diſcloſe the place of her retreat, however plauſible might be the air with which the inquiry was urged; and he endeavoured to call off her attention to Vivaldi. The Confeſſor did not, however, venture, at preſent, to give a hint as to the pretended diſcovery of his ſituation in the inquiſition, but reſerved to a more favourable opportunity ſuch mention, together with the zealous offer of his ſervices to extricate the priſoner. The Marcheſa, believing that her ſon was ſtill engaged in purſuit of Ellena, made many enquiries concerning him, but without expreſſing any ſolicitude for his welfare; reſentment appearing to be the only emotion ſhe retained towards him. While Schedoni replied with circumſpection to her queſtions, he urged inquiries of his own, as to the manner in which the Marcheſa endured the long abſence of Vivaldi; thus endeavouring

to

to aſcertain how far he might hereafter venture to appear in any efforts for liberating him, and how ſhape his conduct reſpecting Ellena. It ſeemed that the Marcheſe was not indifferent as to his ſon's abſence; and, though he had at firſt believed the ſearch for Ellena to have occaſioned it, other apprehenſions now diſturbed him, and taught him the feelings of a father. His numerous avocations and intereſts, however, ſeemed to prevent ſuch anxiety from preying upon his mind; and having diſmiſſed perſons in ſearch of Vivaldi, he paſſed his time in the uſual routine of company and the court. Of the actual ſituation of his ſon it was evident that neither he, nor the Marcheſa, had the leaſt apprehenſion, and this was a circumſtance, which the Confeſſor was very careful to aſcertain.

Before he took leave he ventured to renew the mention of Vivaldi's attachment, and gently to plead for him. The Marcheſa, however, ſeemed inattentive to what he repreſented, till, at length, awaking from her reverie, ſhe ſaid—"Father, you have judged ill——," and, before ſhe concluded the ſentence, ſhe relapſed again into thoughtful ſilence. Believing that he anticipated her meaning, Schedoni began to repeat his own juſtification reſpecting his conduct towards Ellena.

"You have judged erroneouſly, father," reſumed the Marcheſa, with the ſame conſidering air, "in placing the girl in ſuch a ſituation; my ſon cannot fail to diſcover her there."

"Or wherever ſhe may be," replied the Confeſſor, believing that he underſtood the Marcheſa's aim. "It may not be poſſible to conceal her long from his ſearch."

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"The neighbourhood of Naples ought at leaſt to have been avoided," obſerved the Marcheſa.

Schedoni was ſilent, and ſhe added, "So near, alſo, to his own reſidence! How far is the *Santa della Piéta* from the Vivaldi palace?"

Though Schedoni had thought that the Marcheſa, while diſplaying a pretended knowledge of Ellena's retreat, was only endeavouring to obtain a real one, this mention of the place of her actual reſidence ſhocked him; but he replied almoſt immediately, "I am ignorant of the diſtance, for, till now, I was unacquainted that there is a convent of the name you mention. It appears, however, that this *Santa della Piéta* is the place, of all other, which ought to have been avoided. How could you ſuſpect me, lady, of imprudence thus extravagant!"

While Schedoni ſpoke, the Marcheſa regarded him attentively, and then replied, "I may be allowed, good father, to ſuſpect your prudence in this inſtance, ſince you have juſt given me ſo unequivocal a proof of it in another."

She would then have changed the ſubject, but Schedoni, believing this inclination to be the conſequence of her having aſſured herſelf, that ſhe had actually diſcovered Ellena's aſylum, and too reaſonably ſuſpecting the dreadful uſe ſhe deſigned to make of the diſcovery, endeavoured to unſettle her opinion, and miſlead her as to the place of Ellena's abode. He not only contradicted the fact of her preſent reſidence at the *Santa della Piéta*, but, without ſcruple, made a poſitive aſſertion, that ſhe was at a diſtance from Naples, naming at the ſame time, a fictitious place, whoſe obſcurity, he added, would

would be the beſt protection from the purſuit of Vivaldi.

"Very true, father," obſerved the Marcheſa; "I believe that my ſon will not readily diſcover the girl in the place you have named."

Whether the Marcheſa believed Schedoni's aſſertion or not, ſhe expreſſed no farther curioſity on the ſubject, and appeared conſiderably more tranquil than before. She now chatted with eaſe on general topics, while the Confeſſor dared no more to urge the ſubject of his ſecret wiſhes; and having ſupported for ſome time, a converſation moſt uncongenial with his temper, he took his leave, and returned to Naples. On the way thither, he reviewed with exactneſs, the late behaviour of the Marcheſa, and the reſult of this examination was a reſolution—never to renew the ſubject of their converſation, but to ſolemnize without her conſent, the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena.

The Marcheſa, meanwhile, on the departure of Schedoni, remained in the attitude in which he had left her, and abſorbed by the intereſt, which his viſit excited. The ſudden change in his conduct no leſs aſtoniſhed and perplexed, than diſappointed her. She could not explain it by the ſuppoſition of any principle, or motive. Sometimes it occurred to her, that Vivaldi had bribed him with rich promiſes, to promote the marriage, which he contributed to thwart; but, when ſhe conſidered the high expectations ſhe had herſelf encouraged him to cheriſh, the improbability of the conjecture was apparent. That Schedoni, from whatever cauſe, was no longer to be truſted in this buſineſs, was ſufficiently clear, but ſhe endeavoured to conſole herſelf with a hope that a more confidential

perſon

perſon might yet be diſcovered. A part of Schedoni's reſolution ſhe alſo adopted, which was, never again to introduce the ſubject of their late converſation. But, while ſhe ſhould ſilently purſue her own plans, ſhe determined to conduct herſelf towards Schedoni in every other reſpect, as uſual, not ſuffering him to ſuſpect that ſhe had withdrawn her confidence, but inducing him to believe that ſhe had relinquiſhed all farther deſign againſt Ellena.

CHAP. IX.

"We
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide
Through ſhades and plains, along the ſmootheſt ſtream
Of rural life! or ſnatched away by hope,
Through the dim ſpaces of futurity,
With earneſt eye anticipate thoſe ſcenes
Of happineſs and wonder, where the mind,
In endleſs growth and infinite aſcent,
Riſes from ſtate to ſtate, and world to world."

THOMSON.

ELLENA, obedient to the command of Schedoni, withdrew from her home on the day that followed her arrival there, to the *Santa della Piéta*. The Superiour, who had known her from her infancy, and from the acquaintance which ſuch long obſervation afforded, had both eſteemed and loved her, received Ellena with a degree of ſatisfaction proportionate to the concern ſhe had ſuffered when informed of

of her diſaſtrous removal from the Villa Altieri.

Among the quiet groves of this convent, however, Ellena vainly endeavoured to moderate her ſolicitude reſpecting the ſituation of Vivaldi; for, now that ſhe hah a reſpite from immediate calamity, ſhe thought with more intenſe anxiety as to what might be his ſufferings, and her fears and impatience encreaſed, as each day diſappointed her expectation of intelligence from Schedoni.

If the ſoothings of ſympathy and the delicate arts of benevolence could have reſtored the ſerenity of her mind, Ellena would now have been peaceful; for all theſe were offered her by the abbeſs and the ſiſters of the *Santa della Pieta*. They were not acquainted with the cauſe of her ſorrow, but they perceived that ſhe was unhappy, and wiſhed her to be otherwiſe. The ſociety of *Our Lady of Pity*, was ſuch as a convent does not often ſhroud; to the wiſdom and virtue of the Superiour, the ſiſterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and happineſs which diſtinguiſhed them. This lady was a ſhining example to governeſſes of religious houſes, and a ſtriking inſtance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extenſive good that it may thus diffuſe. She was dignified without haughtineſs, religious without bigotry, and mild, though deciſive and firm. She poſſeſſed penetration to diſcover what was juſt, reſolution to adhere to it, and temper to practice it with gentleneſs and grace; ſo that even correction from her, aſſumed the winning air of courteſy: the perſon, whom ſhe admoniſhed, wept in ſorrow for the offence,

offence, instead of being secretly irritated by the reproof, and loved her as a mother, rather than feared her as a judge. Whatever might be her failings, they were effectually concealed by the general benevolence of her heart, and the harmony of her mind; a harmony, not the effect of torpid feelings, but the accomplishment of correct and vigilant judgment. Her religion was neither gloomy nor bigotted; it was the sentiment of a grateful heart offering itself up to a Deity, who delights in the happiness of his creatures; and she conformed to the customs of the Roman church, without supposing a faith in all of them to be necessary to salvation. This opinion, however, she was obliged to conceal, lest her very virtue should draw upon her the punishment of a crime, from some fierce ecclesiastics, who contradicted in their practice the very essential principles, which the christianity they professed would have taught them.

In her lectures to the nuns she seldom touched upon points of faith, but explained and enforced the moral duties, particularly such as were most practicable in the society to which she belonged; such as tended to soften and harmonize the affections to impart that repose of mind, which persuades to the practice of sisterly kindness, universal charity, and the most pure and elevated devotion. When she spoke of religion, it appeared so interesting, so beautiful, that her attentive auditors revered and loved it as a friend, a refiner of the heart, a sublime consoler; and experienced somewhat of the meek and holy ardour, which may belong to angelic natures.

The society appeared like a large family, of which the lady abbess was the mother, rather than

than an aſſemblage of ſtrangers; and particularly when gathered around her, they liſtened to the evening ſermon, which ſhe delivered with ſuch affectionate intereſt, ſuch perſuaſive eloquence, and ſometimes with ſuch pathetic energy, as few hearts could reſiſt.

She encouraged in her convent every innocent and liberal purſuit, which might ſweeten the auſterities of confinement, and which were generally rendered inſtrumental to charity. The *Daughters of Pity* particularly excelled in muſic; not in thoſe difficulties of the art, which diſplay florid graces, and intricate execution but in ſuch eloquence of ſound as ſteals upon the heart, and awakens its ſweeteſt and beſt affections. It was probably the well-regulated ſenſibility of their own minds, that enabled theſe ſiſters to diffuſe through their ſtrains a character of ſuch finely tempered taſte, as drew crowds of viſitors, on every feſtival, to the church of the *Santa della Piéta*.

The local circumſta nces of this convent were ſcarcely leſs agreeable than the harmony of its ſociety was intereſting. Theſe extenſive domains included olive-grounds, vineyards, and ſome corn-land; a conſiderable tract was devoted to the pleaſures of the garden, whoſe groves ſupplied walnuts, almonds, oranges, and citrons, in abundance, and almoſt every kind of fruit and flower, which this luxurious climate nurtured. Theſe gardens hung upon the ſlope of a hill, about a mile within the ſhore, and afforded extenſive views of the country round Naples, and of the gulf. But from the terraces, which extended along a ſemicircular range of rocks that roſe over the convent, and formed a part of the domain, the proſpects were infinitely

finer. They extended on the south to the isle of Capræa, where the gulf expands into the sea; in the west appeared the island of Ischia, distinguished by the white pinnacles of the lofty mountain Epomeo; and near it Prosida, with its many coloured cliffs, rose out of the waves. Overlooking many points towards Puzzuoli, the eye caught beyond other promontories, and others further still, to the north, a glimpse of the sea, that bathes the now desolate shores of Baia; with Capua, and all the towns and villas, that speckle the garden-plains between Caserta and Naples.

In the nearer scene were the rocky heights of Pausilippo, and Naples itself, with all its crowded suburbs ascending among the hills, and mingling with vineyards and overtopping cypress; the castle of San Elmo, conspicuous on its rock, overhanging the magnificent monastery of the Chartreux; while in the scene below appeared the *Castel Nuovo*, with its clustered towers, the long-extended Corso, the mole, with its tall pharos, and the harbour gay with painted shipping, and full to the brim with the blue waters of the bay. Beyond the hills of Naples, the whole horizon to the north and east was bounded by the mountains of the Appenine, an amphitheatre proportioned to the grandeur of the plain, which the gulf spread out below.

These terraces, shaded with acacias and plane-trees, were the favourite haunt of Ellena. Between the opening branches, she looked down upon Villa Altieri, which brought to her remembrance the affectionate Bianchi, with all the sportive years of her childhood; and where some of her happiest hours had been passed in the society of Vivaldi. Along the winding

of the coaſt, too, ſhe could diſtinguiſh many places rendered ſacred by affection, to which ſhe had made excurſions with her lamented relative and Vivaldi; and though ſadneſs mingled with the recollections a view of them reſtored, they were precious to her heart. Here, alone and unobſerved, ſhe frequently yielded to the melancholy which ſhe endeavoured to ſuppreſs in ſociety; and at other times tried to deceive, with books and pencil, the lingering moments of uncertainty concerning the ſtate of Vivaldi; for day after day ſtill elapſed without bringing any intelligence from Schedoni. Whenever the late ſcenes connected with the diſcovery of her family recurred to Ellena, ſhe was ſtruck with almoſt as much amazement as if ſhe was gazing upon a viſion, inſtead of recalling realities. Contraſted with the ſober truth of her preſent life, the paſt appeared like romance; and there were moments when ſhe ſhrunk from the relationſhip of Schedoni with unconquerable affright. The firſt emotions his appearance had excited were ſo oppoſite to thoſe of filial tenderneſs, that ſhe perceived it was now nearly impoſſible to love and revere him as her father, and ſhe endeavoured, by dwelling upon all the obligations, which ſhe believed he had lately conferred upon her, to repay him in gratitude, what was withheld in affection.

In ſuch melancholy conſiderations, ſhe often lingered under the ſhade of the accacias, till the ſun had ſunk behind the far diſtant promontory of Miſeno, and the laſt bell of veſpers ſummoned her to the convent below.

Among the nuns, Ellena had many favourites, but not one that ſhe admired and loved equally with Olivia of San Stefano, the remem-

brance of whom was always accompanied with a fear leſt ſhe ſhould have ſuffered from her generous compaſſion, and a wiſh that ſhe had taken up her abode with the happy ſociety of the *Daughters of Pity*, inſtead of being ſubjected to the tyranny of the abbeſs of San Stefano. To Ellena, the magnificent ſcenes of the *Santa della Piéta* ſeemed to open a ſecure, and, perhaps, a laſt aſylum; for, in her preſent circumſtances, ſhe could not avoid perceiving how menacing and various were the objections to her marriage with Vivaldi, even ſhould Schedoni prove propitious to it. The character of the Marcheſa di Vivaldi, ſuch as it ſtood unfolded by the late occurrences, ſtruck her with diſmay, for her deſigns appeared ſufficiently atrocious, whether they had extended to the utmoſt limit of Ellena's ſuſpicions, or had ſtopped where the affected charity of Schedoni had pointed out. In either caſe, the pertinacity of her averſion, and the vindictive violence of her nature, were obvious.

In this view of her character, however, it was not the inconvenience threatened to thoſe who might become connected with her, that principally affected Ellena, but the circumſtance of ſuch a woman being the mother of Vivaldi; and to alleviate ſo afflicting a conſideration, ſhe endeavoured to believe all the palliating ſuggeſtions of Schedoni, reſpecting the Marcheſa's late intentions. But if Ellena was grieved on diſcovering crime in the character of Vivaldi's parent, what would have been her ſuffering, had ſhe ſuſpected the nature of Schedoni?——what, if ſhe had been told that he was the adviſer of the Marcheſa's plans?——

if ſhe had known that he had been the partner of her intentional guilt? From ſuch ſuffering ſhe was yet ſpared, as well as from that, which a knowledge of Vivaldi's preſent ſituation, and of the reſult of Schedoni's efforts to procure a releaſe from the perils, among which he had precipitated him, would have inflicted. Had ſhe known this, it is probable that in the firſt deſpondency of her mind, ſhe would have relinquiſhed what is called the world, and ſought a laſting aſylum with the ſociety of the holy ſiſters. Even as it was, ſhe ſometimes endeavoured to look with reſignation upon the events which might render ſuch a ſtep deſirable; but it was an effort that ſeldom ſoothed her even with a temporary ſelf-deluſion. Should the veil, however, prove her final refuge, it would be by her own choice; for the lady abbeſs of the *Santa della Piéta* employed no art to win a recluſe, nor ſuffered the nuns to ſeduce votaries to the order.

CHAP. X.

"Sullen and ſad to fancy's frighted eye
Did ſhapes of dun and murky hue advance,
In train tumultuous, all of geſture ſtrange,
And paſſing horrible."

CARACTACUS.

WHILE the late events had been paſſing in the Garganus, and at Naples, Vivaldi and his ſervant Paulo remained impriſoned in diſtinct

chambers of the Inquiſition. They were again ſeparately interrogated. From the ſervant no information could be obtained; he aſſerted only his maſter's innocence, without once remembering to mention his own; clamoured, with more juſtneſs than prudence, againſt the perſons who had occaſioned his arreſt; ſeriouſly endeavouring to convince the inquiſitors, that he himſelf had *no other motive* in having demanded to be brought to theſe priſons than that he might comfort his maſter, he gravely remonſtrated on the injuſtice of ſeparating them, adding, that he was ſure when they knew the rights of the matter, they would order him to be carried to the priſon of Signor Vivaldi.

"I do aſſure your *Sereniſſimo Illuſtriſſimo*," continued Paulo, addreſſing the chief inquiſitor with profound gravity, "that this is the laſt place I ſhould have thought of coming to, on any other account; and if you will only condeſcend to aſk your officials, who took my maſter up, they will tell you *as good*. They knew well enough all along, what I came here for, and if they had known it would be all in vain, it would have been but civil of them to have told me as much, and not have brought me; for this is the laſt place in the world I would have come to, otherwiſe, of my own accord."

Paulo was permitted to harangue in his own way, becauſe his examiners hoped that his prolixity would be a means of betraying circumſtances connected with his maſter. By this view, however, they were miſled, for Paulo, with all his ſimplicity of heart, was both viligant and ſhrewd in Vivaldi's intereſt. But, when he perceived them really convinced, that his ſole motive for viſiting the Inquiſition was that he might conſole his

his master, yet still persisting in the resolution of separately confining him, his indignation knew no bounds. He despised alike their reprehension, their thundering menaces, and their more artful exhibitions; told them of all they had to expect both here and hereafter, for their cruelty to his dear master, and said they might do what they would with him; he defied them to make him more miserable than he was.

It was not without difficulty that he was removed from the chamber; where he left his examiners in a state of astonishment at his rashness, and indignation of his honesty, such as they had, probably, never experienced before.

When Vivaldi was again called up to the table of the Holy Office, he underwent a longer examination than on a former occasion. Several inquisitors attended, and every art was employed to induce him to confess crimes, of which he was suspected, and to draw from him a discovery of others, which might have eluded even suspicion. Still the examiners cautiously avoided informing him of the subject of the accusation on which he had been arrested, and it was, therefore, only on the former assurances of the Benedictine, and the officials in the chapel of San Sebastian, that Vivaldi understood he was accused of having carried off a nun. His answers on the present occasion were concise and firm, and his whole deportment undaunted. He felt less apprehension for himself, than indignation of the general injustice and cruelty, which the tribunal was permitted to exercise upon others; and this virtuous indignation gave a loftiness, a calm heroic grandeur to his mind, which never, for a moment, forsook him, except when he conjectured what might be the sufferings of Ellena. Then, his fortitude and

magnanimity failed, and his tortured ſpirit roſe almoſt to frenzy.

On this, his ſecond examination, he was urged by the ſame dark queſtions, and replied to them with the ſame open ſincerity, as during the firſt. Yet the ſimplicity and energy of truth failed to impreſs conviction on minds, which, no longer poſſeſſing the virtue themſelves, were not competent to underſtand the ſymptoms of it in others. Vivaldi was again threatened with the torture, and again diſmiſſed to his priſon.

On the way to this dreadful abode, a perſon paſſed him in one of the avenues, of whoſe air and figure he thought he had ſome recollection; and, as the ſtranger ſtalked away, he ſuddenly knew him to be the prophetic monk, who had haunted him among the ruins of Paluzzi. In the firſt moment of ſurprize, Vivaldi loſt his preſence of mind ſo far, that he made no attempt to interrupt him. In the next inſtant, however, he paused and looked back, with an intention of ſpeaking; but this myſterious perſon was already at the extremity of the avenue. Vivaldi called, and beſought him to ſtop. Without either ſpeaking, or turning his head, however, he immediately diſappeared beyond a door that opened at his approach. Vivaldi, on attempting to take the way of the monk, was withheld by his guards, and, when he inquired who was the ſtranger he had ſeen, the officials aſked, in their turn, what ſtranger he alluded to.

"He who has juſt paſſed us," replied Vivaldi.

The officials ſeemed ſurprized, "Your ſpirits are diſordered, Signor," obſerved one of them, "I ſaw no perſon paſs!

"He

"He paſſed ſo cloſely," ſaid Vivaldi, "that it was hardly poſſible you could avoid ſeeing him!"

"I did not even hear a footſtep!" added the man.

"I do not recollect that I did," anſwered Vivaldi, "but I ſaw his figure as plainly as I now ſee your's; his black garments almoſt touched me! Was he an inquiſitor?"

The official appeared aſtoniſhed; and, whether his ſurprize was real, or affected for the purpoſe of concealing his knowledge of the perſon alluded to, his embarraſſment and awe ſeemed natural. Vivaldi obſerved, with almoſt equal curioſity and ſurprize, the fear which his face expreſſed; but perceived alſo, that it would avail nothing to repeat his queſtions.

As they proceeded along the avenue, a kind of half-ſtifled groan was ſometimes audible from a diſtance. "Whence come theſe ſounds?" ſaid Vivaldi, "they ſtrike to my heart!"

"They ſhould do ſo," replied the guard.

"Whence come they?" repeated Vivaldi, more impatiently, and ſhuddering.

"From the place of torture," ſaid the official.

"O God! O God!" exclaimed Vivaldi, with a deep groan.

He paſſed with haſty ſteps the door of that terrible chamber, and the guard did not attempt to ſtop him. The officials had brought him, in obedience to the cuſtomary orders they had received, within hearing of thoſe doleful ſounds, for the purpoſe of impreſſing upon his mind the horrors of the puniſhment, with which he was threatened, and of inducing him to confeſs without incurring them.

On this ſame evening, Vivaldi was viſited, in his priſon, by a man whom he had never conſciouſly ſeen before. He appeared to be between forty and fifty; was of a grave and obſervant phyſiognomy, and of manners, which, though ſomewhat auſtere, were not alarming. The account he gave of himſelf, and of his motive for this viſit, was curious. He ſaid that he alſo was a priſoner in the inquiſition, but, as the ground of accuſation againſt him was light, he had been favoured ſo far as to be allowed ſome degree of liberty within certain bounds; that, having heard of Vivaldi's ſituation, he had aſked and obtained leave to converſe with him, which he had done in compaſſion, and with a deſire of aſſuaging his ſufferings, ſo far as an expreſſion of ſympathy and commiſeration might relieve them.

While he ſpoke, Vivaldi regarded him with deep attention, and the improbability that thoſe pretenſions ſhould be true, did not eſcape him; but the ſuſpicion which they occaſioned he prudently concealed. The ſtranger converſed on various ſubjects. Vivaldi's anſwers were cautious and conciſe; but not even long pauſes of ſilence wearied the compaſſionate patience of his viſitor. Among other topics he, at length, introduced that of religion.

"I have, myſelf, been accuſed of hereſy," ſaid he, "and know how to pity others in the ſame ſituation."

"It is of hereſy, then, that I am accuſed!" interrupted Vivaldi, "of hereſy!"

"It availed me nothing that I aſſerted my innocence," continued the ſtranger, without noticing Vivaldi's exclamation, "I was condemned to the torture. My ſufferings were too terrible to be endured! I confeſſed my offence ——"

"Pardon

"Pardon me," interrupted Vivaldi, "but allow me to obſerve, that ſince your ſufferings were ſo ſevere, your's, againſt whom the ground of accuſation was light, what may be the puniſhment of thoſe, whoſe offences are more ſerious?"

The ſtranger was ſomewhat embarraſſed. "My offence was ſlight," he continued, without giving a full anſwer.

"Is it poſſible," ſaid Vivaldi, again interrupting him, "that hereſy can be conſidered as a ſlight offence before the tribunal of the Inquiſition?"

"It was only of a ſlight degree of hereſy," replied the viſitor, reddening with diſpleaſure, "that I was ſuſpected, and ———"

"Does then the Inquiſition allow of degrees in hereſy?" ſaid Vivaldi.

"I confeſſed my offence," added the ſtranger with a louder emphaſis, and the conſequence of this confeſſion was a remiſſion of puniſhment. After a trifling penance I ſhall be diſmiſſed, and probably, in a few days, leave the priſon. Before I left it, I was deſirous of adminiſtering ſome degree of conſolation to a fellow ſufferer; if you have any friends whom you wiſh to inform of your ſituation, do not fear to confide their names and your meſſage to me."

The latter part of the ſpeech was delivered in a low voice, as if the ſtranger feared to be overheard. Vivaldi remained ſilent, while he examined, with cloſer attention, the countenance of his viſitor. It was of the utmoſt importance to him, that his family ſhould be made acquainted with his ſituation; yet he knew not exactly how to interpret, or to confide in this offer. Vivaldi had heard that informers ſometimes viſited

the

the priſoners, and, under the affectation of kindneſs and ſympathy, drew from them a confeſſion of opinions, which were afterwards urged againſt them; and obtained diſcoveries relative to their connections and friends, who were, by theſe inſidious means, frequently involved in their deſtruction. Vivaldi, conſcious of his own innocence, had, on his firſt examination, acquainted the inquiſitor with the names and reſidence of his family; he had, therefore, nothing new to apprehend from revealing them to this ſtranger; but he perceived that if it ſhould be known he had attempted to convey a meſſage, however conciſe and harmleſs, the diſcovery would irritate the jealous inquiſitors againſt him, and might be urged as a new preſumption of his guilt. Theſe conſiderations, together with the diſtruſt which the inconſiſtency of his viſitor's aſſertions, and the occaſional embarraſſment of his manner, had awakened, determined Vivaldi to reſiſt the temptation now offered to him; and the ſtranger, having received his thanks, reluctantly withdrew, obſerving, however, that ſhould any unforeſeen circumſtance detain him in the Inquiſition longer than he had reaſon to expect, he ſhould beg leave to pay him another viſit. In reply to this, Vivaldi only bowed, but he remarked that the ſtranger's countenance changed, and that ſome dark brooding appeared to cloud his mind, as he quitted the chamber.

Several days elapſed, during which Vivaldi heard no more of his new acquaintance. He was then ſummoned to another examination, from which he was diſmiſſed as before; and ſome weeks of ſolitude and of heavy uncertainty ſucceeded, after which he was a fourth time called up to the table of the Holy Office. It was the

ſurrounded by inquiſitors, and a more than uſual ſolemnity appeared in the proceedings.

As proofs of Vivaldi's innocence had not been obtained, the ſuſpicions of the examiners, of courſe, were not removed; and, as he perſiſted in denying the truth of the charge which he underſtood would be exhibited againſt him, and refuſed to make any confeſſion of crimes, it was ordered that he ſhould, within three hours, be put to the *queſtion*. Till then, Vivaldi was once more diſmiſſed to his priſon chamber. His reſolution remained unſhaken, but he could not look, unmoved, upon the horrors which might be preparing for him. The interval of expectation between the ſentence and the accompliſhment of this preliminary puniſhment, was, indeed, dreadful. The ſeeming ignominy of his ſituation, and his ignorance as to the degree of torture to be applied, overcame the calmneſs he had before exhibited, and as he paced his cell, cold damps, which hung upon his forehead, betrayed the agony of his mind. It was not long, however, that he ſuffered from a ſenſe of ignominy; his better judgment ſhewed him, that innocence cannot ſuffer diſgrace from any ſituation or circumſtance, and he once more reſumed the courage and the firmneſs which belong to virtue.

It was about midnight, that Vivaldi heard ſteps approaching, and a murmur of voices at the door of his cell. He underſtood theſe to be the perſons come to ſummon him to the torture. The door was unbarred, and two men, habited in black, appeared at it. Without ſpeaking, they advanced, and throwing over him a ſingular kind of mantle, led him from the chamber.

Along

Along the galleries, and other avenues through which they paſſed, not any perſon was ſeen, and, by the profound ſtillneſs that reigned, it ſeemed as if death had already anticipated his work in theſe regions of horror, and had condemned alike the tortured and the torturer.

They deſcended to the large hall, where Vivaldi had waited on the night of his entrance, and thence through an avenue, and down a long flight of ſteps that led to ſubterranean chambers. His conductors did not utter a ſyllable during the whole progreſs; Vivaldi knew too well that queſtions would only ſubject him to greater ſeverity, and he aſked none.

The doors, through which they paſſed, regularly opened at the touch of an iron rod, carried by one of the officials, and without the appearance of any perſon. The other man bore a torch, and the paſſages were ſo dimly lighted, that the way could ſcarcely have been found without one. They croſſed what ſeemed to be a burial vault, but the extent and obſcurity of the place did not allow it to be aſcertained; and, having reached an iron door, they ſtopped. One of the officials ſtruck upon it three times with the rod, but it did not open as the others had done. While they waited, Vivaldi thought he heard, from within, low intermitting ſounds, as of perſons in their laſt extremity, but, though within, they appeared to come from a diſtance. His whole heart was chilled, not with fear, for at that moment he did not remember himſelf, but with horror.

Having waited a conſiderable time, during which the official did not repeat the ſignal, the door was partly opened by a perſon whom Vivaldi could not diſtinguiſh in the gloom beyond, and

and with whom one of his conductors communicated by ſigns; after which the door was cloſed.

Several minutes had elapſed, when tones of deep voices arouſed the attention of Vivaldi. They were loud and hoarſe, and ſpoke in a language unknown to him. At the ſounds the official immediately extinguiſhed his torch. The voices drew nearer, and, the door again unfolding, two figures ſtood before Vivaldi, which, ſhewn by a glimmering light within, ſtruck him with aſtoniſhment and diſmay. They were cloathed, like his conductors, in black, but in a different faſhion, for their habits were made cloſe to the ſhape. Their faces were entirely concealed beneath a very peculiar kind of cowl, which deſcended from the head to the feet; and their eyes only were viſible through ſmall openings contrived for the ſight. It occurred to Vivaldi that theſe men were torturers; their appearance was worthy of demons. Probably they were thus habited, that the perſons whom they afflicted might not know them; or, perhaps, it was only for the purpoſe of ſtriking terror upon the minds of the accuſed, and thus compelling them to confeſs without further difficulty. Whatever motive might have occaſioned their horrific appearance, and whatever was their office, Vivaldi was delivered into their hands, and in the ſame moment heard the iron door ſhut, which encloſed him with them in a narrow paſſage, gloomily lighted by a lamp ſuſpended from the arched roof. They walked in ſilence on each ſide of their priſoner, and came to a ſecond door, which admitted them inſtantly into another paſſage. A third door, at a ſhort diſtance, admitted them to a third avenue,

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at the end of which one of his myſterious guides ſtruck upon a gate, and they ſtopped. The uncertain ſounds that Vivaldi had fancied he heard, were now more audible, and he diſtinguiſhed, with inexpreſſible horror, that they were uttered by perſons ſuffering.

The gate was at length opened by a figure habited like his conductors, and two other doors of iron, placed very near each other, being alſo unlocked, Vivaldi found himſelf in a ſpacious chamber, the walls of which were hung with black, duſkily lighted by lamps that gleamed in the lofty vault. Immediately on his entrance, a ſtrange ſound ran along the walls, and echoed among other vaults, that appeared, by the progreſs of the ſound, to extend far beyond this.

It was not immediately that Vivaldi could ſufficiently recollect himſelf to obſerve any object before him; and, even when he did ſo, the gloom of the place prevented his aſcertaining many appearances. Shadowy countenances and uncertain forms ſeemed to flit through the duſk, and many inſtruments, the application of which he did not comprehend, ſtruck him with horrible ſuſpicions. Still he heard, at intervals, half-ſuppreſſed groans, and was looking round to diſcover the wretched people from whom they were extorted, when a voice from a remote part of the chamber called on him to advance.

The diſtance, and the obſcurity of the ſpot whence the voice iſſued, had prevented Vivaldi from noticing any perſon there, and he was now ſlowly obeying, when, on a ſecond ſummons, his conductors ſeized his arms, and hurried him forward.

In a remote part of this extenſive chamber, he perceived three perſons ſeated under a black canopy,

nopy, on chairs raiſed ſeveral ſteps from the floor, and who appeared to preſide there in the office of either judges or examiners, or directors of the puniſhments. Below, at a table, ſat a ſecretary, over whom was ſuſpended the only lamp that could enable him to commit to paper what ſhould occur during the examination. Vivaldi now underſtood that the three perſons who compoſed the tribunal were the vicar general, or grand inquiſitor, the advocate of the exchequer, and an ordinary inquiſitor, who was ſeated between the other two, and who appeared more eagerly to engage in the duties of his cruel office. A portentous obſcurity enveloped alike their perſons and their proceedings.

At ſome diſtance from the tribunal ſtood a large iron frame, which Vivaldi conjectured to be the rack, and near it another, reſembling, in ſhape, a coffin, but, happily, he could not diſtinguiſh through the remote obſcurity, any perſon undergoing actual ſuffering. In the vaults beyond, however, the diabolical decrees of the inquiſitors ſeemed to be fulfilling; for, whenever a diſtant door opened for a moment, ſounds of lamentation iſſued forth, and men, whom he judged to be familiars, habited like thoſe who ſtood beſide him, were ſeen paſſing to and fro within.

Vivaldi almoſt believed himſelf in the infernal regions; the diſmal aſpect of this place, the horrible preparation for puniſhment, and above all, the diſpoſition and appearance of the perſons that were ready to inflict it, confirmed the reſemblance. That any human being ſhould willingly afflict a fellow being who had never injured, or even offended him; that, unſwayed by paſſion, he ſhould deliberately become the means of torturing him,

appeared to Vivaldi nearly incredible! But when he looked at the three perſons who compoſed the tribunal, and conſidered that they had not only voluntarily undertaken the cruel office they fulfilled, but had probably long regarded it as the ſummit of their ambition, his aſtoniſhment and indignation were unbounded.

The grand inquiſitor having again called on Vivaldi by name, admoniſhed him to confeſs the truth, and avoid the ſuffering that awaited him.

As Vivaldi had on former examinations ſpoken the truth, which was not believed, he had no chance of eſcaping preſent ſuffering, but by aſſerting falſhood: in doing ſo, to avoid ſuch monſtrous injuſtice and cruelty, he might, perhaps, have been juſtified, had it been certain that ſuch aſſertion could affect himſelf alone; but ſince he knew that the conſequence muſt extend to others, and above all, believed that Ellena di Roſalba muſt be involved in it, he did not heſitate for an inſtant to dare whatever torture his firmneſs might provoke. But even if morality could have forgiven falſhood in ſuch extraordinary circumſtances as theſe, policy, after all, would have forbidden it, ſince a diſcovery of the artifice would probably have led to the final deſtruction of the accuſed perſon.

Of Ellena's ſituation he would now have aſked, however deſperate the queſtion; would again have aſſerted her innocence, and ſupplicated for compaſſion, even to inquiſitors, had he not perceived that, in doing ſo, he ſhould only furniſh them with a more exquiſite means of torturing him than any other they could apply; for if, when all the terrors of his ſoul concerning her were underſtood, they ſhould threaten to increaſe her

her ſufferings, as the puniſhment of what was termed his obſtinacy, they would, indeed, become the maſters of his integrity, as well as of his perſon.

The tribunal again, and repeatedly, urged Vivaldi to confeſs himſelf guilty; and the inquiſitor, at length, concluded with ſaying that the judges were innocent of whatever conſequence might enſue from his obſtinacy; ſo that, if he expired beneath his ſufferings, himſelf only, not they, would have occaſioned his death.

"I am innocent of the charges which I underſtand are urged againſt me," ſaid Vivaldi, with ſolemnity; "I repeat, that I am innocent! If, to eſcape the horrors of theſe moments, I could be weak enough to declare myſelf guilty, not all your racks could alter truth, and make me ſo, except in that aſſertion. The conſequence of your tortures, therefore, be upon your own heads!"

While Vivaldi ſpoke, the vicar-general liſtened with attention, and when he had ceaſed to ſpeak, appeared to meditate; but the inquiſitor was irritated by the boldneſs of his ſpeech, inſtead of being convinced by the juſtneſs of his repreſentation; and made a ſignal for the officers to prepare for the *queſtion*. While they were obeying, Vivaldi obſerved, notwithſtanding the agitation he ſuffered, a perſon croſs the chamber, whom he immediately knew to be the ſame that had paſſed him in an avenue of the inquiſition on a former night, and whom he had then fancied to be the myſterious ſtranger of Paluzzi. Vivaldi now fixed his eyes upon him, but his own peculiar ſituation prevented his feeling the intereſt he had formerly ſuffered concerning him.

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The figure, air, and ſtalk, of this perſon were ſo ſtriking, and ſo ſtrongly reſembled thoſe of the monk of Paluzzi, that Vivaldi had no longer a doubt as to their identity. He pointed him out to one of the officials, and inquired who he was. While he ſpoke, the ſtranger was paſſing forward, and, before any reply was given, a door leading to the farther vaults ſhut him from view. Vivaldi, however, repeated the inquiry, which the official appeared unable to anſwer, and a reproof from the tribunal reminded him that he muſt not aſk queſtions there. Vivaldi obſerved that it was the grand inquiſitor who ſpoke, and that the manner of the official immediately changed.

The familiars, who were the ſame that had conducted Vivaldi into the chamber, having made ready the inſtrument of torture, approached him, and, after taking off his cloak and veſt bound him with ſtrong cords. They threw over his head the cuſtomary black garment, which entirely enveloped his figure, and prevented his obſerving what was farther preparing. In this ſtate of expectation he was again interrogated by the inquiſitor.

"Was you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo at Naples?" ſaid he.

"Yes," replied Vivaldi.

"Did you ever expreſs there a contempt for the Catholic faith?"

"Never," ſaid Vivaldi.

"Neither by word or action? continued the inquiſitor.

"Never, by either!"

"Recollect yourſelf," added the inquiſitor. "Did you never inſult there a miniſter of our moſt holy church?"

Vivaldi

Vivaldi was ſilent: he began to perceive the real nature of the charge which was to be urged againſt him, and that it was too plauſible to permit his eſcape from the puniſhment, which is adjudged for hereſy. Queſtions ſo direct and minute had never been put to him here on his former examinations; they had been reſerved for a moment when it was believed he could not evade them; and the real charge had been concealed from him, that he might not be prepared to elude it.

"Anſwer!" repeated the inquiſitor.—

"Did you ever inſult a miniſter of the Catholic faith, in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?"

"Did you not inſult him while he was performing an act of holy penance?" ſaid another voice.

Vivaldi ſtarted, for he inſtantly recollected the well-known tones of the monk of Paluzzi. "Who aſks the queſtion?" demanded Vivaldi.

"It is you who are to anſwer here," reſumed the inquiſitor. "Anſwer to what I have required."

"I have offended a miniſter of the church," replied Vivaldi, "but never could intentionally inſult our holy religion. You are not acquainted, fathers, with the injuries that provoked——"

"Enough!" interrupted the inquiſitor; "ſpeak to the queſtion. Did you not, by inſult and menace, force a pious brother to leave unperformed the act of penance in which he had engaged himſelf? Did you not compel him to quit the church, and fly for refuge to his convent?"

"No," replied Vivaldi. "'Tis true, he left the church, and that in conſequence of my conduct

duct there; but the conſequence was not neceſſary; if he had only replied to my inquiry, or promiſed to reſtore her of whom he had treacherouſly robbed me, he might have remained quietly in the church till this moment, had that depended upon my forbearance."

"What!" ſaid the vicar-general, "would you have compelled him to ſpeak, when he was engaged in ſilent penance? You confeſs, that you occaſioned him to leave the church. That is enough."

"Where did you firſt ſee Ellena di Roſalba?" ſaid the voice, which had ſpoken once before.

"I demand again, who gives the queſtion," anſwered Vivaldi.

"Recollect yourſelf," ſaid the inquiſitor, "a criminal cannot make a demand."

"I do not perceive the connection between your admonition and your aſſertion," obſerved Vivaldi.

"You appear to be rather too much at your eaſe," ſaid the inquiſitor. "Anſwer to the queſtion which was laſt put to you, or the familiars ſhall do their duty."

"Let the ſame perſon aſk it," replied Vivaldi.

The queſtion was repeated in the former voice.

"In the church of San Lorenzo, at Naples," ſaid Vivaldi, with a heavy ſigh, "I firſt beheld Ellena di Roſalba."

"Was ſhe then profeſſed?" aſked the vicar-general.

"She never accepted the veil," replied Vivaldi, "nor ever intended to do ſo."

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"Where did ſhe reſide at that period?"

"She lived with a relative at Villa Altieri, and would yet reſide there, had not the machinations of a monk occaſioned her to be torn from her home, and confined in a convent, from which I had juſt aſſiſted to releaſe her, when ſhe was again ſeized, and upon a charge moſt falſe and cruel.——O reverend fathers! I conjure, I ſupplicate———" Vivaldi reſtrained himſelf, for he was going to have betrayed, to the mercy of inquiſitors, all the feelings of his heart.

"The name of the monk?" ſaid the ſtranger, earneſtly.

"If I miſtake not," replied Vivaldi, "you are already acquainted with it. The monk is called father Schedoni. He is of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, in Naples, and the ſame who accuſes me of having inſulted him in the church of that name."

"How did you know him for your accuſer?" aſked the ſame voice.

"Becauſe he is my only enemy," replied Vivaldi.

"Your enemy!" obſerved the inquiſitor; "a former depoſition ſays, you were unconſcious of having one! You are inconſiſtent in your replies."

"You were warned not to viſit Villa Altieri," ſaid the unknown perſon. "Why did you not profit by the warning?"

"I was warned by yourſelf," anſwered Vivaldi. "Now I know you well."

"By me!" ſaid the ſtranger, in a ſolemn tone.

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"By you!" repeated Vivaldi: "you who alſo foretold the death of Signora Bianchi; and you are that enemy—that father Schedoni, by whom I am accuſed."

"Whence come theſe queſtions?" demanded the vicar general. "Who has been authoriſed thus to interrogate the priſoner?"

No reply was made. A buſy hum of voices from the tribunal ſucceeded the ſilence. At length, the murmuring ſubſided, and the monk's voice was heard again.

"I will declare thus much," it ſaid, addreſſing Vivaldi; "I am not father Schedoni."

The peculiar tone and emphaſis, with which this was delivered, more than the aſſertion itſelf, perſuaded Vivaldi that the ſtranger ſpoke truth; and, though he ſtill recognized the voice of the monk of Pauluzzi, he did not know it to be that of Schedoni. Vivaldi was aſtoniſhed! He would have torn the veil from his eyes, and once more viewed this myſterious ſtranger, had his hands been at liberty. As it was, he could only conjure him to reveal his name, and the motives for his former conduct.

"Who is come amongſt us?" ſaid the vicar general, in the voice of a perſon who means to inſpire in others the awe he himſelf ſuffers.

"Who is come amongſt us?" he repeated, in a louder tone. Still no anſwer was returned; but again a confuſed murmur ſounded from the tribunal, and a general conſternation ſeemed to prevail. No perſon ſpoke with ſufficient pre-eminence to be underſtood by Vivaldi; ſomething extraordinary appeared to be

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paſſing, and he awaited the iſſue with all the patience he could command. Soon after he heard doors opened, and the noiſe of perſons quitting the chamber. A deep ſilence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were ſtill beſide him, waiting to begin their work of torture.

After a conſiderable time had elapſed, Vivaldi heard footſteps advancing, and a perſon give orders for his releaſe, that he might be carried back to his cell.

When the veil was removed from his eyes, he perceived that the tribunal was diſſolved, and that the ſtranger was gone. The lamps were dying away, and the chamber appeared more gloomily terrific than before.

The familiars conducted him to the ſpot at which they had received him; whence the officers who had led him thither, guarded him to his priſon. There, ſtretched upon his bed of ſtraw, in ſolitude and in darkneſs, he had leiſure enough to reflect upon what had paſſed, and to recollect with minute exactneſs every former circumſtance connected with the ſtranger. By comparing thoſe with the preſent, he endeavoured to draw a more certain concluſion as to the identity of this perſon, and his motives for the very extraordinary conduct he had purſued. The firſt appearance of this ſtranger, among the ruins of Paluzzi, when he had ſaid that Vivaldi's ſteps were watched, and had cautioned him againſt returning to Villa Altieri, was recalled to his mind. Vivaldi re-conſidered, alſo, his ſecond appearance on the ſame ſpot, and his ſecond warning; the circumſtances, which had attended his own adventures within the fortreſs;—the monk's pre-

diction of Bianchi's death, and his evil tidings reſpecting Ellena, at the very hour when ſhe had been ſeized and carried from her home. The longer he conſidered theſe ſeveral inſtances, as they were now connected in his mind, with the certainty of Schedoni's evil diſpoſition towards him, the more he was inclined to believe, notwithſtanding the voice of ſeeming truth which had juſt affirmed the contrary, that the unknown perſon was Schedoni himſelf, and that he had been employed by the Marcheſa, to prevent Vivaldi's viſits to Villa Altieri. Being thus an agent in the events of which he had warned Vivaldi, he was too well enabled to predict them. Vivaldi pauſed upon the remembrance of Signor Bianchi's death; he conſidered the extraordinary and dubious circumſtances that had attended it, and ſhuddered as a new conjecture croſſed his mind.——The thought was too dreadful to be permited, and he diſmiſſed it inſtantly.

Of the converſation, however, which he had afterwards held with the Confeſſor in the Marcheſa's cabinet, he recollected many particulars that ſerved to renew his doubts as to the identity of the ſtranger; the behaviour of Schedoni when he was obliquely challenged for the monk of Paluzzi, ſtill appeared that of a man unconſcious of diſguiſe; and above all, Vivaldi was ſtruck with the ſeeming candour of his having pointed out a circumſtance, which removed the probability that the ſtranger was a brothr of the *Santa del Pianto*.

Some particulars, alſo, of the ſtranger's conduct did not agree with what might have been expected from Schedoni, even though

the Confeſſor had really been Vivaldi's enemy; a circumſtance which the latter was no longer permitted to doubt. Nor did thoſe particular circumſtances accord, as he was inclined to believe, with the manner of a being of this world; and, when Vivaldi conſidered the ſuddenneſs and myſtery, with which the ſtranger had always appeared and retired, he felt diſpoſed to adopt again one of his earlieſt conjectures, which undoubtedly the horrors of his preſent abode diſpoſed his imagination to admit, as thoſe of his former ſituation in the vaults of Paluzzi, together with a youthful glow of curioſity concerning the marvellous, had before contributed to impreſs them upon his mind.

He concluded his preſent reflections as he had began them—in doubt and perplexity; but at length found a reſpite from thought and from ſuffering in ſleep.

Midnight had been paſſed in the vaults of the Inquiſition; but it was probably not yet two o'clock, when he was imperfectly awakened by a ſound, which he fancied proceeded from within his chamber. He raiſed himſelf to diſcover what had occaſioned the noiſe; it was, however, impoſſible to diſcern any object, for all was dark, but he liſtened for a return of the ſound. The wind only, was heard moaning among the inner buildings of the priſon, and Vivaldi concluded, that his dream had mocked him with a mimic voice.

Satisfied with this concluſion, he again laid his head on his pillow of ſtraw, and ſoon ſunk into a ſlumber. The ſubject of his waking thoughts ſtill haunted his imagination, and the ſtranger, whoſe voice he had this night recognized as that of the monk of Paluzzi, appeared before

him. Vivaldi, on perceiving the figure of this unknown, felt, perhaps, nearly the ſame degrees of awe, curioſity, and impatience that he would have ſuffered, had he beheld the ſubſtance of this ſhadow. The monk, whoſe face was ſtill ſhrowded, he thought advanced, till, having come within a few paces of Vivaldi, he pauſed, and, lifting the awful cowl that had hitherto concealed him, diſcloſed—not the countenance of Schedoni, but one which Vivaldi did not recollect ever having ſeen before! It was not leſs intereſting to curioſity, than ſtriking to the feelings. Vivaldi at the firſt glance ſhrunk back;—ſomething of that ſtrange and indeſcribable air, which we attach to the idea of a ſupernatural being, prevailed over the features; and the intenſe and fiery eyes reſembled thoſe of an evil ſpirit, rather than of a human character. He drew a poniard from beneath a fold of his garment, and, as he diſplayed it, pointed with a ſtern frown to the ſpots which diſcoloured the blade; Vivaldi perceived they were of blood! He turned away his eyes in horror, and, when he again looked round in his dream the figure was gone.

A groan awakened him, but what were his feelings, when, on looking up, he perceived the ſame figure ſtanding before him! It was not, however, immediately that he could convince himſelf the appearance was more than the phantom of his dream, ſtrongly impreſſed upon an alarmed fancy. The voice of the monk, for his face was as uſual concealed, recalled Vivaldi from his error; but his emotion cannot eaſily be conceived, when the ſtranger ſlowly lifting that myſterious cowl, diſcovered to him the ſame awful countenance, which had characterized the viſion in his ſlumber. Un-

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able to inquire the occaſion of this appearance, Vivaldi gazed in aſtoniſhment and terror, and did not immediately obſerve, that, inſtead of a dagger, the monk held a lamp, which gleamed over every deep furrow of his features, yet left their ſhadowy markings to hint the paſſions and the hiſtory of an extraordinary life.

"You are ſpared for this night," ſaid the ſtranger, "but for to-morrow"———he paused.

"In the name of all that is moſt ſacred," ſaid Vivaldi, endeavouring to recollect his thoughts, "who are you, and what is your errand?"

"Aſk no queſtions," replied the monk, ſolemnly;——"but anſwer *me*."

Vivaldi was ſtruck by the tone, with which he ſaid this, and dared not to urge the inquiry at the preſent moment.

"How long have you known father Schedoni?" continued the ſtranger, "Where did you firſt meet?"

"I have known him about a year, as my mother's confeſſor," replied Vivaldi. "I firſt ſaw him a corridor of the Vivaldi palace; it was evening, and he was returning from the Marcheſa's cloſe."

"Are you certain as to this?" ſaid the monk, with peculiar emphaſis. "It is of conſequence that you ſhould be ſo."

"I am certain," repeated Vivaldi.

"It is ſtrange," obſerved the monk, after a pauſe, "that a circumſtance, which muſt have appeared trivial to you at the moment, ſhould have left ſo ſtrong a mark on your memory! In two years we have time to forget many things!" He ſighed as he ſpoke.

"I remember the circumſtance," ſaid Vivaldi, "becauſe I was ſtruck with his appearance; the evening was far advanced——it was duſk, and he came upon me ſuddenly. His voice ſtartled me; as he paſſed he ſaid to himſelf—"It is for veſpers." At the ſame time I heard the bell of the Spirito Santo."

"Do you know who he is?" ſaid the ſtranger, ſolemnly.

"I know only what he appears to be," replied Vivaldi.

"Did you never hear any report of his paſt life?"

"Never," anſwered Vivaldi.

"Never any thing extraordinary concerning him?" added the monk.

Vivaldi pauſed a moment; for he now recollected the obſcure and imperfect ſtory, which Paulo had related while they were confined in the dungeon of Paluzzi, reſpecting a confeſſion made in the church of the Black Penitents; but he could not preſume to affirm, that it concerned Schedoni. He remembered alſo the monk's garments, ſtained with blood, which he had diſcovered in the vaults of that fort. The conduct of the myſterious being, who now ſtood before him, with many other particulars of his own adventures there, paſſed like a viſion over his memory. His mind reſembled the glaſs of a magician, on which the apparitions of long buried events ariſe, and as they fleet away, point portentouſly to ſhapes half-hid in the duſkineſs of futurity. An unuſual dread ſeized upon him; and a ſuperſtition, ſuch as he had never before admitted in an equal degree, uſurped his judgment. He look-

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ed up to the ſhadowy countenance of the ſtranger; and almoſt believed he beheld an inhabitant of the world of ſpirits.

The monk ſpoke again, repeating in a ſeverer tone, "Did you never hear any thing extraordinary concerning father Schedoni?"

"Is it reaſonable," ſaid Vivaldi, recollecting his courage, "that I ſhould anſwer the queſtions, the minute queſtions of a perſon who refuſes to tell me even his name?"

"My name is paſſed away——it is no more remembered," replied the ſtranger, turning from Vivaldi,——"I leave you to your fate."

"What fate?" aſked Vivaldi, "and what is the purpoſe of this viſit? I conjure you in the tremendous name of the Inquiſition, to ſay!"

"You will know full ſoon; have mercy on yourſelf!"

"What fate?" repeated Vivaldi.

"Urge me no further," ſaid the ſtranger; "but anſwer to what I ſhall demand. Schedoni——"

"I have told you all that I certainly know concerning him," interrupted Vivaldi, "the reſt is only conjecture."

"What is that conjecture? Does it relate to a confeſſion made in the church of the Black Penitents of the Santa Maria del Pianto?

"It does!" replied Vivaldi with ſurpriſe.

"What was that confeſſion?"

"I know not," anſwered Vivaldi.

"Declare the truth," ſaid the ſtranger, ſternly.

"A confeſſion," replied Vivaldi, "is ſacred, and forever buried in the boſom of the prieſt

to whom it is made. How, then, is it to be ſuppoſed, that I can be acquainted with the ſubject of this ?"

" Did you never hear, that father Schedoni had been guilty of ſome great crimes, which he endeavours to eraſe from his conſcience by the ſeverity of penance ?"

" Never !" ſaid Vivaldi.

" Did you never hear that he had a wife—a brother ?"

" Never !"

" Nor the means he uſed—no hint of—murder, of ——"

The ſtranger pauſed, as if he wiſhed Vivaldi to fill up his meaning, Vivaldi was ſilent and aghaſt.

" You know nothing then, of Schedoni," reſumed the monk after a deep pauſe—" nothing of his paſt life ?"

" Nothing, except what I have mentioned," replied Vivaldi.

" Then liſten to what I ſhall unfold !" continued the monk, with ſolemnity. " To-morrow night you will be again carried to the place of torture ; you will be taken to a chamber beyond that in which you were this night. You will there witneſs many extraordinary things, of which you have not now any ſuſpicion. Be not diſmayed ; I ſhall be there, though, perhaps, not viſible."

" Not viſible !" exclaimed Vivaldi.

" Interrupt me not, but liſten.—When you are aſked of father Schedoni, ſay—that he has lived for fifteen years in the diſguiſe of a monk, a member of the Dominicans of the Spirito Santo, at Naples. When you are aſked who he is, reply —Ferando Count di Bruno. You will be aſked the motive, for ſuch diſguiſe. In reply to this,

refer

refer them to the *Black Penitents* of the Santa Maria del Pianto, near that city; bid the inquisitors ſummon before their tribunal one father Anſaldo di Rovalli, the grand penitentiary of the ſociety, and command him to divulge the crimes confeſſed to him in the year 1752, on the evening of the twenty fourth of April, which was then the vigil of Santo Marco, in a confeſſional of the Santa del Pianto"

"It is probable he may have forgotten ſuch confeſſion, at this diſtance of time," obſerved Vivaldi.

"Fear not but he will remember," replied the ſtranger.

"But will his conſcience ſuffer him to betray the ſecrets of a confeſſion?" ſaid Vivaldi.

The tribunal command, and his conſcience is abſolved," anſwered the monk, "He may not refuſe to obey! You are further to direct your examiners to ſummon father Schedoni, to anſwer for the crimes which Anſaldo ſhall reveal." The monk pauſed, and ſeemed waiting the reply of Vivaldi, who, after a momentary conſideration, ſaid,

"How can I do all this, and upon the inſtigation of a ſtranger! Neither conſcience nor prudence will ſuffer me to aſſert what I cannot prove. It is true that I have reaſon to believe Schedoni is my bitter enemy, but I will not be unjuſt even to him. I have no proof that he is the Count di Bruno, nor that he is the perpetrator of the crimes you allude to, whatever thoſe may be; and I will not be made an inſtrument to ſummon any man before a tribunal, where innocence is no protection from ignominy, and where ſuſpicion alone may inflict death."

" You doubt, then, the truth of what I aſſert ?" ſaid the monk, in a haughty tone.

" Can I believe that of which I have no proof?" replied Vivaldi.

" Yes, there are caſes which do not admit of proof; under your peculiar circumſtances, this is one of them; you can act only upon aſſertion. I atteſt," continued the monk, raiſing his hollow voice to a tone of ſingular ſolemnity, " I atteſt the powers which are beyond this earth, to witneſs to the truth of what I have delivered !"

As the ſtranger uttered this adjuration, Vivaldi obſerved, with emotion, the extraordinary expreſſion of his eyes; Vivaldi's preſence of mind, however, did not forſake him, and, in the next moment, he ſaid, " But who is he that thus atteſts ? It is upon the aſſertion of a ſtranger that I am to rely, in defect of proof ! It is a ſtranger who calls upon me to bring ſolemn charges againſt a man, of whoſe guilt I know nothing !

" You are not required to bring charges, you are only to ſummon him who will."

" I ſhould ſtill aſſiſt in bringing forward accuſations, which may be founded in error," replied Vivaldi. " If you are convinced of their truth, why do not you ſummon Anſaldo yourſelf ?"

" I ſhall do more," ſaid the monk.

" But why not ſummon alſo ?" urged Vivaldi.

" I ſhall *appear*," ſaid the ſtranger, with emphaſis.

Vivaldi, though ſomewhat awed by the manner which accompanied theſe words, ſtill urged his inquiries, " As a witneſs ?" ſaid he.

" Aye,

" Aye, as a dreadful witneſs!" replied the monk.

" But may not a witneſs ſummon others before the tribunal of the inquiſition?" continued Vivaldi, faulteringly.

" He may," ſaid the ſtranger.

" Why then," obſerved Vivaldi," am I, a ſtranger to you, called upon to do that which you could perform yourſelf?"

" Aſk no further," ſaid the monk, " but anſwer, whether you will deliver the ſummons?"

" The charges, which muſt follow," replied Vivaldi, " appear to be of a nature too ſolemn to juſtify my promoting them. I reſign the taſk to you."

" When *I* ſummon," ſaid the ſtranger, " *you* ſhall obey!"

Vivaldi, again awed by his manner, again juſtified his refuſal, and concluded with repeating his ſurprize, that he ſhould be required to aſſiſt in this myſterious affair, " Since I neither know you, father," he added, " nor the Penitentiary Anſaldo, whom you bid me admoniſh to appear."

" You ſhall know me hereafter," ſaid the ſtranger, frowningly; and he drew from beneath his garment a dagger!

Vivaldi remembered his dream.

" Mark thoſe ſpots," ſaid the Monk.

Vivaldi looked, and beheld blood!

" This blood, added the ſtranger, pointing to the blade, " would have ſaved your's! Here is ſome print of truth! To-morrow night you will meet me in the chambers of death!"

As he ſpoke, he turned away; and, before Vivaldi had recovered from his conſternation, the light

light diſappeared. Vivaldi knew that the ſtranger had quittted the priſon, only by the ſilence which prevailed there.

He remained ſunk in thought, till, at the dawn of day, the man, on watch, unfaſtened the door of his cell, and brought, as uſual, a jug of water, and ſome bread. Vivaldi inquired the name of the ſtranger who had viſited him in the night. The centinel looked ſurprized, and Vivaldi repeated the queſtion before he could obtain an anſwer.

"I have been on guard ſince the firſt hour," ſaid the man, and no perſon, in that time, has paſſed through this door!"

Vivaldi regarded the centinel with attention, while he made this aſſertion, and did not perceive in his manner any conſciouſneſs of falſhood; yet he knew not how to believe what he had affirmed. "Did you hear no noiſe, either?" ſaid Vivaldi. "Has all been ſilent during the night?"

"I have heard only the bell of San Dominico ſtrike upon the hour," replied the man, "and the watch word of the centinels."

"This is incomprehenſible!" exclaimed Vivaldi, "What! no footſteps, no voice?"

The man ſmiled contemptuouſly. "None, but of the centinels," he replied.

"How can you be certain you heard only the centinels, friend?" added Vivaldi.

"They ſpeak only to paſs the watch word, and the claſh of their arms is heard at the ſame time."

"But their footſteps!—how are they diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of other perſons?"

"By the heavineſs of their tread; our ſandals are braced with iron. But why theſe queſtions, Signor?"

"You

" You have kept guard at the door of this chamber?" ſaid Vivaldi.

" Yes, Signor."

" And you have not once heard, during the whole night, a voice from within it?"

" None, Signor."

" Fear nothing from diſcovery, friend; confeſs that you have ſlumbered."

" I had a comrade," replied the centinel, angrily, " has he, too, ſlumbered! and if he had, how could admittance be obtained without our keys?"

" And thoſe might eaſily have been procured, friend, if you were overcome with ſleep. You may rely upon my promiſe of ſecrecy."

" What!" ſaid the man, " have I kept guard for three years in the Inquiſition, to be ſuſpected, by a heretic, of neglecting my duty?"

" If you were ſuſpected by an heretic," replied Vivaldi, " you ought to conſole yourſelf by recollecting that his opinions are conſidered to be erroneous."

" We were watchful every minute of the night," ſaid the centinel, going.

" This is incomprehenſible!" ſaid Vivaldi, " By what means could the ſtranger have entered my priſon?"

" Signor, you ſtill dream!" replied the centinel, pauſing, " No perſon has been here."

" *Still* dream!" repeated Vivaldi, " how do you know that I have dreamt at all?" His mind deeply affected by the extraordinary circumſtances of the dream, and the yet more extraordinary incident that had followed, Vivaldi gave a meaning to the words of the centinel, which did not belong to them.

" When

"When people ſleep, they are apt to dream," replied the man, dryly. "I ſuppoſed *you* had ſlept, Signor."

"A perſon, habited like a monk, came to me in the night," reſumed Vivaldi, "and he deſcribed the appearance of the ſtranger. The centinel, while he liſtened, became grave and thoughtful."

"Do you know any perſon reſembling the one I have mentioned?" ſaid Vivaldi.

"No!" replied the guard.

"Though you have not ſeen him enter my priſon," continued Vivaldi, "you may, perhaps, recollect ſuch a perſon, as an inhabitant of the Inquiſition."

"San Dominico forbid!"

Vivaldi, ſurprized at this exclamation, inquired the reaſon for it.

"I know him not," replied the centinel, changing countenance, and he abruptly left the priſon. Whatever conſideration might occaſion this ſudden departure, his aſſertion that he had been for three years a guard of the Inquiſition could ſcarcely be credited, ſince he had held ſo long a dialogue with a priſoner, and was, apparently, inſenſible of the danger he incurred by ſo doing.

CHAP. XI.

———"Is it not dead midnight?
Cold fearful drops ſtand on my trembling fleſh.
What do I fear?"

SHAKESPEARE.

AT about the ſame hour, as on the preceding night, Vivaldi heard perſons approaching his priſon, and, the door unfolding, his former conductors appeared. They threw over him the ſame mantle as before, and, in addition, a black veil, that completely muffled his eyes; after which, they led him from the chamber. Vivaldi heard the door ſhut, on his departure, and the centinels followed his ſteps, as if their duty was finiſhed, and he was to return thither no more. At this moment, he remembered the words of the ſtranger when he had diſplayed the poniard, and Vivaldi apprehended the worſt, from having thwarted the deſigns of a perſon apparently ſo malignant; but he exulted in the rectitude, which had preſerved him from debaſement, and, with the magnanimous enthuſiaſm of virtue, he almoſt welcomed ſufferings, which would prove the firmneſs of his juſtice towards an enemy; for he determined to brave every thing, rather than impute to Schedoni circumſtances, the truth of which he poſſeſſed no means of aſcertaining.

While Vivaldi was conducted, as on the preceding night, through many paſſages, he endeavoured to diſcover, by their length, and the abruptneſs of their turnings, whether they were the

the ſame he had traverſed before. Suddenly, one of his conductors cried "Steps!" It was the firſt word Vivaldi had ever heard him utter. He immediately perceived that the ground ſunk, and he began to deſcend; as he did which, he tried to count the number of the ſteps, that he might form ſome judgment whether this was the flight he had paſſed before. When he had reached the bottom, he inclined to believe that it was not ſo; and the care which had been obſerved in blinding him, ſeemed to indicate that he was going to ſome new place.

He paſſed through ſeveral avenues, and then aſcended; ſoon after which, he again deſcended a very long ſtair-caſe, ſuch as he had not any remembrance of, and they paſſed over a conſiderable extent of level ground. By the hollow ſounds which his ſteps returned, he judged that he was walking over vaults. The footſteps of the centinels who had followed from the cell were no longer heard, and he ſeemed to be left with his conductors only. A ſecond flight appeared to lead him into ſubterraneous vaults, for he perceived the air change, and felt a damp vapour wrapt round him. The menace of the monk, that he ſhould meet him in the chambers of death, frequently occurred to Vivaldi.

His conductors ſtopped in this vault, and ſeemed to hold a conſultation, but they ſpoke in ſuch low accents, that their words were not diſtinguiſhable, except a few unconnected ones, that hinted of more than Vivaldi could comprehend. He was, at length, again led forward; and ſoon after, he heard the heavy grating of hinges, and perceived that he was paſſing through ſeveral doors, by the ſituation of which Vivaldi judged they

they were the ſame he had entered the night before, and concluded, that he was going to the hall of the tribunal.

His conductors ſtopped again, and Vivaldi heard the iron rod ſtrike three times upon a door; immediately a ſtrange voice ſpoke from within, and the door was uncloſed. Vivaldi paſſed on, and imagined that he was admitted into a ſpacious vault; for the air was freer, and his ſteps ſounded to a diſtance.

Preſently, a voice, as on the preceding night, ſummoned him to come forward, and Vivaldi underſtood that he was again before the tribunal. It was the voice of the inquiſitor who had been his chief examiner.

"You, Vincentio di Vivaldi," it ſaid, "anſwer to your name, and to the queſtions which ſhall be put to you, without equivocation, on pain of the torture."

As the monk had predicted, Vivaldi was aſked what he knew of father Schedoni, and, when he replied, as he had formerly done to his myſterious viſitor, he was told that he knew more than he acknowledged.

"I *know* no more," replied Vivaldi.

"You equivocate," ſaid the inquiſitor. "Declare what you have heard, and remember that you formerly took an oath to that purpoſe."

Vivaldi was ſilent, till a tremendous voice from the tribunal commanded him to reſpect his oath.

"I do reſpect it," ſaid Vivaldi; "and I conjure to believe that I alſo reſpect truth, when I declare, that what I am going to relate, is a report to which I give no confidence, and concerning even the probability of which I cannot produce the ſmalleſt proof."

"Reſpect

" Reſpect truth !" ſaid another voice from the tribunal, and Vivaldi fancied he diſtinguiſhed the tones of the monk. He pauſed a moment, and the exhortation was repeated. Vivaldi then related what the ſtranger had ſaid concerning the family of Schedoni, and the diſguiſe which the father had aſſumed in the convent of the Spirito Santo ; but forbore even to name the penitentiary Anſaldo, and any circumſtance connected with the extraordinary confeſſion. Vivaldi concluded, with again declaring, that he had not ſufficient authority to juſtify a belief in thoſe reports.

" On what authority do you repeat them ?" ſaid the vicar-general.

Vivaldi was ſilent.

" On what authority ?" inquired the inquiſitor, ſternly.

Vivaldi, after a momentary heſitation, ſaid, " What I am about to declare, holy fathers, is ſo extraordinary———"

" Tremble !" ſaid a voice cloſe to his ear, which he inſtantly knew to be the monk's, and the ſuddenneſs of which electrified him. He was unable to conclude the ſentence.

" What is your authority for the reports ?" demanded the inquiſitor.

" It is unknown, even to myſelf !" anſwered Vivaldi.

" Do not equivocate !" ſaid the vicar-general.

" I ſolemnly proteſt," rejoined Vivaldi, " that I know not either the name or the condition of my informer, and that I never even beheld his face, till the period when he ſpoke of father Schedoni.

" Tremble !"

" Tremble !" repeated the ſame low, but emphatic voice in his ear. Vivaldi ſtarted, and turn- involuntarily towards the ſound, though his eyes could not aſſiſt his curioſity.

" You did well to ſay, that you had ſomething extraordinary to add," obſerved the inquiſitor. " 'Tis evident, alſo, that you expected ſomething extraordinary from your judges, ſince you ſuppoſed they would credit theſe aſſertions."

Vivaldi was too proud to attempt the juſtifying himſelf againſt ſo groſs an accuſation, or to make any reply.

" Why do you not ſummon father Anſaldo ?" ſaid the voice. " Remember my words !"

Vivaldi, again awed by the voice, heſitated, for an inſtant, how to act, and in that inſtant his courage returned.

" My informer ſtands beſide me !" ſaid Vivaldi, boldly ; " I know his voice ! Detain him ; it is of conſequence."

" Whoſe voice ?" demanded the inquiſitor. " No perſon ſpoke but myſelf !"

" Whoſe voice ?" ſaid the vicar-general.

" The voice was cloſe beſide me," replied Vivaldi. " It ſpoke low, but I knew it well."

" This is either the cunning, or the frenzy of deſpair !" obſerved the vicar-general.

" Not any perſon is now beſide you, except the familiars," ſaid the inquiſitor, " and they wait to do their office, if you ſhall refuſe to anſwer the queſtions put to you."

" I perſiſt in my aſſertion," replied Vivaldi ; " and I ſupplicate that my eyes may be unbound, that I may know my enemy."

The tribunal, after a long private conſultation, granted the requeſt ; the veil was withdrawn, and Vivaldi perceived beſide him—only the familiars !

Their

Their faces, as is usual, were concealed. It appeared that one of these torturers must be the mysterious enemy, who pursued him, if, indeed, that enemy was an inhabitant of the earth! and Vivaldi requested that they might be ordered to uncover their features. He was sternly rebuked for so presumptuous a requisition, and reminded of the inviolable law and faith, which the tribunal had pledged, that persons appointed to their awful office should never be exposed to the revenge of the criminal, whom it might be their duty to punish.

"Their duty!" exclaimed Vivaldi, thrown from his guard by strong indignation. "And is faith held sacred with demons!"

Without awaiting the order of the tribunal, the familiars immediately covered Vivaldi's face with the veil, and he felt himself in their grasp. He endeavoured, however, to disentangle his hands, and, at length, shook these men from their hold, and again unveiled his eyes; but the familiars were instantly ordered to replace the veil.

The inquisitor bade Vivaldi to recollect in whose presence he then was, and to dread the punishment which his resistance had incurred, and which would be inflicted without delay, unless he could give some instance, that might tend to prove the truth of his late assertions.

"If you expect that I should say more," replied Vivaldi, "I claim, at least, protection from the unbidden violence of the men who guard me. If they are suffered, at their pleasure, to sport with the misery of their prisoner, I will be inflexibly silent; and, since I must suffer, it shall be according to the laws of the tribunal."

The vicar-general, or, as he is called, the grand inquisitor, promised Vivaldi the degree of protection

tection he claimèd, and demanded, at the ſame time, what were the words he had juſt heard.

Vivaldi conſidered, that though juſtice bade him avoid accuſing an enemy of ſuſpicious circumſtances, concerning which he had no proof, yet, that neither juſtice nor common ſenſe required he ſhould make a ſacrifice of himſelf to the dilemma in which he was placed: he, therefore, without further ſcruple, acknowledged, that the voice had bidden him require of the tribunal to ſummon one father Anſaldo, the grand penitentiary of the Santa del Pianto, near Naples, and alſo father Schedoni, who was to anſwer to extraordinary charges, which would be brought againſt him by Anſaldo. Vivaldi anxiouſly and repeatedly declared, that he knew not the nature of the charges, nor that any juſt grounds for them exiſted.

Theſe aſſertions ſeemed to throw the tribunal into new perplexity. Vivaldi heard their buſy voices in low debate, which continued for a conſiderable time. In this interval he had leiſure to perceive the many improbabilities that either of the familiars ſhould be the ſtranger who ſo myſteriouſly haunted him; and among theſe was the circumſtance of his having reſided ſo long at Naples.

The tribunal, after ſome time had elapſed in conſultation, proceeded on the examination, and Vivaldi was aſked what he knew of father Anſaldo. He immediately replied, that Anſaldo was an utter ſtranger to him, and that he was not even acquainted with a ſingle perſon reſiding in the Santa del Pianto or who had any knowledge of the penitentiary.

"How!" ſaid the grand inquiſitor. "You forget that the perſon, who bade you require of this

this tribunal to ſummon Anſaldo, has knowledge of him."

"Pardon me, I do not forget," replied Vivaldi; "and I requeſt it may be remembered that I am not acquainted with that perſon. If, therefore, he had given me any account of Anſaldo, I could not have relied upon its authenticity." Vivaldi again required of the tribunal to underſtand that he did not ſummon Anſaldo, or any other perſon, before them, but had merely obeyed their command to repeat what the ſtranger had ſaid.

The tribunal acknowledged the juſtneſs of this injunction, and exculpated him from any harm that ſhould be the conſequence of the ſummons. But this aſſurance of ſafety for himſelf was not ſufficient to appeaſe Vivaldi, who was alarmed leſt he ſhould be the means of bringing an innocent perſon under ſuſpicion. The grand inquiſitor again addreſſed him, after a general ſilence had been commanded in the court.

"The account you have given of your informer," ſaid he, "is ſo extraordinary, that it would not deſerve credit, but that you have diſcovered the utmoſt reluctance to reveal the charges he gave you, from which it appears, that, on your part, at leaſt, the ſummons is not malicious. But are you certain that you have not deluded yourſelf, and that the voice beſide you was not an imaginary one, conjured up by your agitated ſpirits?"

"I am certain," replied Vivaldi, with firmneſs.

"It is true," reſumed the grand inquiſitor, "that ſeveral perſons were near you, when you exclaimed, that you heard the voice of your informer;

informer; yet no perſon heard it beſides yourſelf!"

"Where are thoſe perſons now?" demanded Vivaldi.

"They are diſperſed; alarmed at your accuſation."

"If you will ſummon them," ſaid Vivaldi, "and order, that my eyes may be uncovered, I will point out to you, without heſitation, the perſon of my informer, ſhould he remain among them."

The tribunal commanded that they ſhould appear, but new difficulties aroſe. It was not remembered of whom the crowd conſiſted; a few individuals only were recollected, and theſe were ſummoned.

Vivaldi, in ſolemn expectation, heard ſteps and the hum of voices gathering round him, and impatiently awaited for the words that would reſtore him to ſight, and, perhaps, releaſe him from uncertainty. In a few moments he heard the command given: the veil was once more removed from his eyes, and he was ordered to point out the accuſer. Vivaldi threw an haſty glance upon the ſurrounding ſtrangers.

"The lights burn dimly," ſaid he, "I cannot diſtinguiſh theſe faces."

It was ordered that a lamp ſhould be lowered from the roof, and that the ſtrangers ſhould arrange themſelves on either ſide of Vivaldi. When this was done, and he glanced his eyes again upon the crowd, "He is not here!" ſaid Vivaldi; not one of theſe countenances reſembles the monk of Paluzzi. Yet, ſtay; who is he that ſtands in the ſhade behind thoſe perſons on the left? Bid him lift his cowl!"

The

The crowd fell back, and the perſon, to whom Vivaldi had pointed, was left alone within the circle.

" He is an officer of the Inquiſition," ſaid a man near Vivaldi, " and he may not be compelled to diſcover his face, unleſs by an expreſs command from the tribunal."

" I call upon the tribunal to command it!" ſaid Vivaldi.

" Who calls!" exclaimed a voice, and Vivaldi recognized the tones of the monk, but he knew not exactly whence they came.

" I, Vincentio di Vivaldi," replied the priſoner, " I claim the privilege that has been awarded me, and bid you unveil your countenance."

There was a pauſe of ſilence in the court, except that a dull murmur ran through the tribunal. Meanwhile, the figure within the circle ſtood motionleſs, and remained veiled.

" Spare him," ſaid the man, who had before addreſſed Vivaldi; " he has reaſons for wiſhing to remain unknown, which you cannot conjecture. He is an officer of the Inquiſition, and not the perſon you apprehend."

Perhaps I *can* conjecture his reaſons," replied Vivaldi, who, raiſing his voice, added, " I appeal to this tribunal, and command you, who ſtand alone within the circle, you in black garments to unveil your features!"

Immediately a loud voice iſſued from the tribunal, and ſaid,

" We command you, in the name of the moſt holy Inquiſition, to reveal yourſelf!"

The ſtranger trembled, but, without preſuming to heſitate, uplifted his cowl. Vivaldi's eyes were eagerly fixed upon him; but the action diſcloſed, not the countenance of the monk! but of

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an official whom he recollected to have ſeen once before, though exactly on what occaſion he did not now remember.

"This is not my informer!" ſaid Vivaldi, turning from him with deep diſappointment, while the ſtranger dropped his cowl, and the crowd cloſed upon him. At the aſſertion of Vivaldi, the members of the tribunal looked upon each other doubtingly, and were ſilent, till the grand inquiſitor waving his hand, as if to command attention, addreſſed Vivaldi.

"It appears, then, that you *have* formerly ſeen the face of your informer!"

"I have already declared ſo," replied Vivaldi.

The grand inquiſitor demanded when, and where, he had ſeen it.

"Laſt night, and in my priſon," anſwered Vivaldi.

"In your priſon!" ſaid the ordinary inquiſitor, contemptuouſly, who had before examined him, "and in your dreams, too, no doubt!"

"In your priſon!" exclaimed ſeveral members of the lower tribunal.

"He dreams ſtill!" obſerved an inquiſitor. "Holy fathers! he abuſes your patience, and the frenzy of terror has deluded his credulity. We neglect the moments."

"We muſt inquire further into this," ſaid another inquiſitor. "Here is ſome deception. If you, Vincentio di Viraldi, have aſſerted a falſhood—tremble!"

Whether Vivaldi's memory ſtill vibrated with the voice of the monk, or that the tone in which this ſame word was now pronounced, did reſemble it, he almoſt ſtarted, when the inquiſitor had ſaid *tremble!* and he demanded who ſpoke then.

" It is ourſelf," anſwered the inquiſitor.

After a ſhort converſation among the members of the tribunal, the grand inquiſitor gave orders that the centinels, who had watched on the preceding night at the priſon door of Vivaldi, ſhould be brought into the hall of juſtice. The perſons, who had been lately ſummoned into the chamber, were now bidden to withdraw, and all further examination was ſuſpended till the arrival of the centinels: Vivaldi heard only the low voices of the inquiſitors, as they converſed privately together, and he remained ſilent, thoughtful, and amazed.

When the centinels appeared, and were aſked who had entered the priſon of Vivaldi during the laſt night, they declared, without heſitation, or confuſion, that not any perſon had paſſed through the door after the hour when the priſoner had returned from examination, till the following morning, when the guard had carried in the uſual allowance of bread and water. In this aſſertion, they perſiſted, without the leaſt equivocation, notwithſtanding which they were ordered into confinement, till the affair ſhould be cleared up.

The doubts, however, which were admitted, as to the integrity of theſe men, did not contribute to diſſipate thoſe, which had prevailed over the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion. On the contrary, the ſuſpicions of the tribunal, augmenting with their perplexity, ſeemed to fluctuate equally over every point of the ſubject before them, till, inſtead of throwing any light upon the truth, they only ſerved to involve the whole in deeper obſcurity. More doubtful than before of the honeſty of Vivaldi's extraordinary aſſertions, the

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grand inquiſitor informed him, that if, after further inquiry into this affair, it ſhould appear he had been trifling with the credulity of his judges, he would be ſeverely puniſhed for his audacity; but that on the other hand, ſhould there be reaſon to believe that the centinels had failed in their duty, and that ſome perſon had entered his priſon during the night, the tribunal would proceed in a different manner.

Vivaldi, perceiving that, to be believed, it was neceſſary he ſhould be more circumſtantial, deſcribed, with exactneſs, the perſon and appearance of the monk, without, however, mentioning the poniard which had been exhibited. A profound ſilence reigned in the chamber while he ſpoke; it ſeemed a ſilence not merely of attention, but of aſtoniſhment. Vivaldi himſelf was awed, and, when he had concluded, almoſt expected to hear the voice of the monk uttering defiance, or threatening vengeance; but all remained huſhed, till the inquiſitor, who had firſt examined him, ſaid, in a ſolemn tone,

"We have liſtened with attention to what you have delivered, and will give the caſe a full inquiry. Some points, on which you have touched, excite our amazement, and call for particular regard. Retire whence you came—and ſleep this night without fear;—*you will ſoon know more.*"

Vivaldi was immediately led from the chamber, and, ſtill blindfolded, re-conducted to the priſon to which he had ſuppoſed it was deſigned he ſhould return no more. When the veil was withdrawn, he perceived that his guard was changed.

Again left to the ſilence of his cell, he reviewed all that had paſſed in the chamber of juſtice;

the queſtions which had been put to him; the different manners of the inquiſitors; the occurrence of the monk's voice; and the ſimilarity, which he had fancied he perceived between it and that of an inquiſitor, when the latter pronounced the word *tremble*; but the conſideration of all theſe circumſtances did not in any degree relieve him from his perplexity. Sometimes he was inclined to think that the monk was an inquiſitor, and the voice had more than once appeared to proceed from the tribunal; but he remembered, alſo, that, more than once, it had ſpoken cloſe to his ear, and he knew that a member of this tribunal might not leave his ſtation during the examination of a priſoner, and that, even if he had dared to do ſo, his ſingular dreſs would have pointed him out to notice, and conſequently to ſuſpicion, at the moment when Vivaldi had exclaimed, that he heard the voice of his informer.

Vivaldi, however, could not avoid meditating, with ſurprize, on the laſt words which the inquiſitor, who had been his chief examiner, had addreſſed to him, when he was diſmiſſed from before the tribunal. Theſe were the more ſurprizing, becauſe they were the firſt from him that had in any degree indicated a wiſh to conſole or quiet the alarm of the priſoner; and Vivaldi even fancied that they betrayed ſome fore-knowledge that he would not be diſturbed this night by the preſence of his awful viſitor. He would entirely have ceaſed to apprehend, though not to expect, had he been allowed a light, and a weapon of defence, if, in truth, the ſtranger was of a nature to fear a weapon; but, to be thus expoſed to the deſigns of a myſterious and powerful being, whom he was conſcious of ha

ing offended, to ſuſtain ſuch a ſituation, without ſuffering anxiety, required ſomewhat more than courage, or leſs than reaſon.

CHAP. XII.

"—It came o'er my ſoul as doth the thunder,
While diſtant yet, with an unexpected burſt,
It threats the trembling ear. Now to the trial."

CARACTACUS.

IN conſequence of what had tranſpired at the laſt examination of Vivaldi, the grand penitentiary Anſaldo, together with the father Schedoni, were cited to appear before the table of the holy office.

Schedoni was arreſted on his way to Rome, whither he was going privately to make further efforts for the liberation of Vivaldi, whoſe releaſe he had found it more difficult to effect, than his impriſonment; the perſon upon whoſe aſſiſtance the Confeſſor relied in the firſt inſtance, having boaſted of more influence than he poſſeſſed, or perhaps thought it prudent to exert. Schedoni had been the more anxious to procure an immediate releaſe for Vivaldi, leſt a report of his ſituation ſhould reach his family, notwithſtanding the precautions, which are uſually employed to throw an impenetrable ſhrowd over the priſoners of this dreadful tribunal, and bury them for

ever from the knowledge of their friends. Such premature diſcovery of Vivaldi's circumſtances, Schedoni apprehended might include alſo a diſcovery of the perſecutor, and draw down upon himſelf the abhorrence and the vengeance of a family, whom it was now, more than ever, his wiſh and his intereſt to conciliate. It was ſtill his intention, that the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena ſhould be privately ſolemnized immediately on the releaſe of the priſoner, who, even if he had reaſon to ſuſpect Schedoni for his late perſecutor, would then be intereſted in concealing his ſuſpicions for ever, and from whom therefore, no evil was to be apprehended.

How little did Vivaldi foreſee, that in repeating to the tribunal the ſtranger's ſummons of father Schedoni, he was deferring, or, perhaps, wholly preventing his own marriage with Ellena di Roſalba! How little, alſo, did he apprehend what would be the further conſequences of a diſcloſure, which the peculiar circumſtances of his ſituation had hardly permitted him to withhold, though, could he have underſtood the probable event of it, he would have braved all the terrors of the tribunal, and death itſelf, rather than incur the remorſe of having promoted it.

The motive for his arreſtation was concealed from Schedoni, who had not the remoteſt ſuſpicion of its nature, but attributed the arreſt, to a diſcovery, which the tribunal had made of his being the accuſer of Vivaldi. This diſcloſure he attributed to his own imprudence, in having ſtated as an inſtance of Vivaldi's contempt for the Catholic faith, that he had inſulted a

prieſt

prieſt while doing penance in the church of the Spirito Santo. But by what art the tribunal had diſcovered that he was the prieſt alluded to, and the author of the accuſation, Schedoni could by no means conjecture. He was willing to believe that this arreſt was only for the purpoſe of obtaining proof of Vivaldi's guilt; and the Confeſſor knew that he could ſo conduct himſelf in evidence, as in all probability to exculpate the priſoner, from whom, when he ſhould explain himſelf, no reſentment on account of his former conduct was to be apprehended. Yet Schedoni was not perfectly at eaſe; for it was poſſible that a knowledge of Vivaldi's ſituation, and of the author of it, had reached his family, and had produced his own arreſt. On this head, however, his fears were not powerful; ſince, the longer he dwelt upon the ſubject, the more improbable it appeared that ſuch a diſcloſure, at leaſt ſo far as it related to himſelf, could have been affected.

Vivaldi, from the night of his late examination, was not called upon, till Schedoni and father Anſaldo appeared together in the hall of the tribunal. The two latter had already been ſeparately examined, and Anſaldo had privately ſtated the particulars of the confeſſion he had received on the vigil of the Santo Marco, in the year 1752, for which diſcloſure he had received formal abſolution. What had paſſed at that examination does not appear, but on this his ſecond interrogation, he was required to repeat the ſubject and the circumſtances of the confeſſion. This was probably with a view of obſerving its effect upon Schedoni and on Vivaldi, which would direct the opinion

of the tribunal as to the guilt of the Confeſſor, and the veracity of the young priſoner.

On this night a very exact inquiry was made, concerning every perſon, who had obtained admiſſion into the hall of juſtice; ſuch officials as were not immediately neceſſary to aſſiſt in the ceremonies of the tribunal were excluded, together with every other perſon belonging to the Inquiſition not material to the evidence, or to the judges. When this ſcrutiny was over, the priſoners were brought in, and their conductors ordered to withdraw. A ſilence of ſome moments prevailed in the hall; and, however different might be the reflections of the ſeveral priſoners, the degree of anxious expectation was in each, probably, nearly the ſame.

The grand-vicar having ſpoken a few words in private to a perſon on his left hand, an inquiſitor roſe.

"If any perſon in this court," ſaid he, "is known by the name of father Schedoni, belonging to the Dominican ſociety of the Spirito Santo at Naples, let him appear!"

Schedoni anſwered to the ſummons. He came forward with a firm ſtep, and, having croſſed himſelf, and bowed to the tribunal, awaited in ſilence its commands.

The penitentiary Anſaldo was next called upon. Vivaldi obſerved that he faultered as he advanced; and that his obeiſance to the tribunal was more profound than Schedoni's had been. Vivaldi himſelf was then ſummoned; his air was calm and dignified, and his countenance expreſſed the ſolemn energy of his feelings, but nothing of dejection.

Schedoni and Anſaldo were now, for the firſt time, confronted. Whatever might be the feelings

feelings of Schedoni on beholding the penitentiary of the *Santa del Pianto*, he effectually concealed them.

The grand-vicar himſelf opened the examination, "You, father Schedoni, of the Spirito Santo," he ſaid, "anſwer and ſay, whether the perſon who ſtands before you, bearing the title of grand penitentiary of the order of the *Black Penitents*, and preſiding over the convent of the *Santa Maria del Pianto* at Naples, is known to you."

To this requiſition Schedoni replied with firmneſs in the negative.

"You have never, to your knowledge, ſeen him before this hour?"

"Never!" ſaid Schedoni.

"Let the oath be adminiſtered," added the grand-vicar. Schedoni having accepted it; the ſame queſtions were put to Anſaldo concerning the Confeſſor, when, to the aſtoniſhment of Vivaldi and of the greater part of the court, the penitentiary denied all knowledge of Schedoni. His negative was given, however, in a leſs deciſive manner than that of the Confeſſor, and when the uſual oath was offered, Anſaldo declined to accept it.

Vivaldi was next called upon to identify Schedoni: he declared, that the perſon who was then pointed out to him, he had never known by any other denomination than that of father Schedoni; and that he had always underſtood him to be a monk of the Spirito Santo; but Vivaldi was at the ſame time careful to repeat, that he knew nothing further relative to his life.

Schedoni was ſomewhat ſurprized at this apparent candour of Vivaldi towards himſelf,

but accuſtomed to impute an evil motive to all conduct, which he could not clearly comprehend, he did not ſcruple to believe, that ſome latent miſchief was directed againſt him in this ſeemingly honeſt declaration.

After ſome further preliminary forms had paſſed, Anſaldo was ordered to relate the particulars of the confeſſion, which had been made to him on the eve of the Santo Marco. It muſt be remembered, that this was ſtill what is called in the Inquiſition, a *private* examination.

After he had taken the cuſtomary oaths to relate neither more nor leſs than the truth of what had paſſed before him, Anſaldo's depoſitions were written down nearly in the following words; to which Vivaldi liſtened with almoſt trembling attention, for, beſides the curioſity which ſome previous circumſtances had excited reſpecting them, he believed that his own fate in a great meaſure depended upon a diſcovery of the fact to which they led. What, if he had ſurmiſed how much! and that the perſon, whom he had been in ſome degree inſtrumental in citing before this tremendous tribunal, was the father of his Ellena di Roſalba!

Anſaldo, having again anſwered to his name and titles, gave his depoſition as follows:

"It was on the eve of the twenty-fifth of April, and in the year 1752, that as I ſat, according to my cuſtom, in the confeſſional of San Marco, I was alarmed by deep groans, which came from the box on my left hand."

Vivaldi obſerved, that the date now mentioned agreed with that recorded by the ſtranger, and he was thus prepared to believe what might

might follow, and to give his confidence to this extraordinary and unſeen perſonage.

Anſaldo continued, "I was the more alarmed by theſe ſounds, becauſe I had not been prepared for them; I knew not that any perſon was in the confeſſional, nor had even obſerved any one paſs along the aiſle—but the duſkineſs of the hour may account for my having failed to do ſo; it was after ſun-ſet, and the tapers at the ſhrine of San Antonio as yet burned feebly in the twilight."

"Be brief, holy father," ſaid the inquiſitor who had formerly been moſt active in examining Vivaldi; ſpeak cloſely to the point."

"The groans would ſometimes ceaſe," reſumed Anſaldo, "and long pauſes of ſilence follow; they were thoſe of a ſoul in agony, ſtruggling with the conſciouſneſs of guilt, yet wanting reſolution to confeſs it. I tried to encourage the penitent, and held forth every hope of mercy and forgiveneſs which my duty would allow, but for a conſiderable time without effect;—the enormity of the ſin ſeemed too big for utterance, yet the penitent appeared equally unable to endure the concealment of it. His heart was burſting with the ſecret, and required the comfort of abſolution, even at the price of the ſevereſt penance."

"Facts!" ſaid the inquiſitor, "theſe are only ſurmiſes."

"Facts will come full ſoon!" replied Anſaldo, and bowed his head, "the mention of them will petrify you, holy fathers! as they did me, though not for the ſame reaſons. While I endeavoured to encourage the penitent, and aſſured him, that abſolution ſhould follow the acknowledgment of his crimes, however heinous

thoſe

thoſe crimes might be, if accompanied by ſincere repentance, he more than once began his confeſſion, and abruptly dropt it. Once, indeed, he quitted the confeſſional; his agitated ſpirit required liberty; and it was then, as he walked with perturbed ſteps along the aiſle, that I firſt obſerved his figure. He was in the habit of a white friar, and, as nearly as I can recollect, was about the ſtature of him, the father Schedoni, who now ſtands before me."

As Anſaldo delivered theſe words, the attention of the whole tribunal was turned upon Schedoni, who ſtood unmoved, and with his eyes bent towards the ground.

"His face," continued the penitentiary, "I did not ſee; he was, with good reaſon, careful to conceal it; other reſemblance, therefore, than the ſtature, I cannot point out between them. The voice, indeed, the voice of the penitent, I think I ſhall never forget; I ſhould know it again at any diſtance of time."

"Has it not ſtruck your ear, ſince you came within theſe walls?" ſaid a member of the tribunal.

"Of that hereafter," obſerved the inquiſitor, "you wander from the point, father."

The vicar-general remarked, that the circumſtances juſt related were important, and ought not to be paſſed over as irrelevant. The inquiſitor ſubmitted to this opinion, but objected that they were not pertinent to the moment; and Anſaldo was again bidden to repeat what he had heard at confeſſion.

"When the ſtranger returned to the ſteps of the confeſſional, he had acquired ſufficient reſolution to go through with the taſk he had im-

poſe

poſed upon himſelf, and a thrilling voice ſpoke through the grate the facts I am about to relate."

Father Anſaldo pauſed, and was ſomewhat agitated; he ſeemed endeavouring to recollect courage to go through with what he had begun. During this pauſe, the ſilence of expectation rapt the court, and the eyes of the tribunal were directed alternately to Anſaldo and Schedoni, who certainly required ſomething more than human firmneſs to ſupport unmoved the ſevere ſcrutiny, and the yet ſeverer ſuſpicions, to which he ſtood expoſed. Whether, however, it was the fortitude of conſcious innocence, or the hardihood of atrocious vice; that protected the Confeſſor, he certainly did not betray any emotion. Vivaldi, who had unceaſingly obſerved him from the commencement of the depoſitions, felt inclined to believe that he was not the penitent deſcribed. Anſaldo, having, at length recollected himſelf, proceeded as follows:

'I have been through life,' ſaid the penitent, 'the ſlave of my paſſions, and they have led me into horrible exceſſes. I had once a brother!'——He ſtopped, and deep groans again told the agony of his ſoul; at length, he added—'That brother had a wife!——Now liſten, father, and ſay, whether guilt like mine may hope for abſolution! She was beautiful——I loved her; ſhe was virtuous, and I deſpaired. You, father,' he continued in a frightful tone, 'never knew the fury of deſpair! It overcame or communicated its own force to every other paſſion of my ſoul, and I ſought to releaſe myſelf from its tortures by any means. My brother died!'——The penitent pauſed again,"

again," continued Anſaldo, "I trembled while I liſtened; my lips were ſealed. At length, I bade him proceed, and he ſpoke as follows. ——'My brother died at a diſtance from home.' ——Again the penitent pauſed, and the ſilence continued ſo long, that I thought it proper to inquire of what diſorder the brother had expired. 'Father, I was his murderer!' ſaid the penitent in a voice which I never can forget; it ſunk into my heart."

Anſaldo appeared affected by the remembrance, and was for a moment ſilent. At the laſt words Vivaldi had particularly noticed Schedoni, that he might judge by their effect upon him, whether he was guilty; but he remained in his former attitude, and his eyes were ſtill fixed upon the ground.

"Proceed, father!" ſaid the inquiſitor, "what was your reply to this confeſſion?"

"I was ſilent," ſaid Anſaldo; "but at length I bade the penitent go on. 'I contrived, ſaid he, that my brother ſhould die at a diſtance from home, and I ſo conducted the affair, that his widow never ſuſpected the cauſe of his death. It was not till long after the uſual time of mourning had expired, that I ventured to ſolicit her hand: but ſhe had not yet forgotten my brother, and ſhe rejected me. My paſſion would no longer be trifled with. I cauſed her to be carried from her houſe, and ſhe was afterwards willing to retrieve her honour by the marriage vow. I had ſacrificed my conſcience, without having found happineſs; ——ſhe did not even condeſcend to conceal her diſdain. Mortified, exaſperated by her conduct, I began to ſuſpect that ſome other emotion than reſentment occaſioned this diſdain; and

and laſt of all jealouſy——jealouſy came to crown my miſery—to light up all my paſſions into madneſs!'

"The penitent," added Anſaldo, "appeared by the manner in which he uttered this, to be nearly frantic at the moment, and convulſive ſobs ſoon ſtifled his words. When he reſumed his confeſſion, he ſaid, 'I ſoon found an object for my jealouſy. Among the few perſons, who viſited us in the retirement of our country reſidence, was a gentleman, who, I fancied, loved my wife; I fancied too, that, whenever he appeared, an air of particular ſatisfaction was viſible on her countenance'. She ſeemed to have pleaſure in converſing with, and ſhewing him diſtinction. I even ſometimes thought, ſhe had pride in diſplaying to me the preference ſhe entertained for him, and that an air of triumph, and even of ſcorn, was addreſſed to me, whenever ſhe mentioned his name. Perhaps, I miſtook reſentment for love, and ſhe only wiſhed to puniſh me, by exciting my jealouſy. Fatal error! ſhe puniſhed herſelf alſo!"

"Be leſs circumſtantial, father," ſaid the inquiſitor.

Anſaldo bowed his head, and continued, "One evening," continued the penitent, 'that I returned home unexpectedly, I was told that a viſitor was with my wife! As I approached the apartment where they ſat, I heard the voice of Sacchi; it ſeemed mournful and ſupplicating. I ſtopped to liſten, and diſtinguiſhed enough to fire me with vengeance. I reſtrained myſelf, however, ſo far as to ſtep ſoftly to a lattice that opened from the paſſage, and overlooked the apartment. The traitor was on his knee before her. Whether ſhe had heard my ſtep, or obſerved my face, through the

the high lattice, or that ſhe reſented his conduct, I know not, but ſhe roſe immediately from her chair. I did not pauſe to queſtion her motive; but, ſeizing my ſtiletto, I ruſhed into the room, with intent to ſtrike it to the villain's heart. The ſuppoſed aſſaſſin of my honour eſcaped into the garden, and was heard of no more.'——But your wife? ſaid I. 'Her boſom received the poniard!' replied the penitent."

Anſaldo's voice faultered, as he repeated this part of the confeſſion, and he was utterly unable to proceed. The tribunal, obſerving his condition, allowed him a chair, and, after a ſtruggle of ſome moments, he added, "Think, holy fathers, O think! what muſt have been my feelings at that inſtant! I was myſelf the lover of the woman, whom he confeſſed himſelf to have murdered."

"Was ſhe innocent?" ſaid a voice; and Vivaldi, whoſe attention had latterly been fixed upon Anſaldo, now, on looking at Schedoni, perceived that it was he who had ſpoken. At the ſound of his voice, the penitentiary turned inſtantly towards him. There was a pauſe of general ſilence, during which Anſaldo's eyes were earneſtly fixed upon the accuſed. At length, he ſpoke, "She was innocent!" He replied, with ſolemn emphaſis, "She was moſt virtuous!"

Schedoni had ſhrunk back within himſelf; he aſked no further. A murmur ran through the tribunal, which roſe by degrees, till it broke forth into audible converſation; at length, the ſecretary was directed to note the queſtion of Schedoni.

"Was that the voice of the penitent, which you have juſt heard?" demanded the inquiſitor of Anſaldo.

Anſaldo. " Remember, you have ſaid that you ſhould know it again !"

" I think it was," replied Anſaldo ; " but I cannot ſwear to that."

" What infirmity of judgment is this !" ſaid the ſame inquiſitor, who himſelf was ſeldom troubled with the modeſty of doubt, upon any ſubject. Anſaldo was bidden to reſume the narrative.

" On this diſcovery of the murderer," ſaid the penitentiary, " I quitted the confeſſional, and my ſenſes forſook me before I could deliver orders for the detection of the aſſaſſin. When I recovered, it was too late ; he had eſcaped ! From that hour to the preſent, I have never ſeen him, nor dare I affirm that the perſon now before me is he."

The inquiſitor was about to ſpeak, but the grand-vicar waved his hand, as a ſignal for attention, and, addreſſing Anſaldo, ſaid, " Although you may be unacquainted with Schedoni, the monk of the Spirito Santo, reverend father, can you not recollect the perſon of the Count di Bruno, your former friend ?"

Anſaldo again looked at Schedoni, with a ſcrutinizing eye ; he fixed it long ; but the countenance of Schedoni ſuffered no change.

" No !" ſaid the penitentiary, at length, " I dare not take upon me to aſſert, that this is the Count di Bruno. If it is he, years have wrought deeply on his features. That the penitent was the Count di Bruno I have proof ; he mentioned my name as his viſitor, and particular circumſtances known only to the Count and myſelf ; but that father Schedoni was the penitent, I repeat it, I dare not affirm."

" But

" But that dare I !" ſaid another voice ; and Vivaldi, turning towards it, beheld the myſterious ſtranger advancing, his cowl now thrown back, and an air of menace overſpreading every terrific feature. Schedoni, in the inſtant that he perceived him, ſeemed agitated ; his countenance, for the firſt time, ſuffered ſome change.

The tribunal was profoundly ſilent, but ſurprize, and a kind of reſtleſs expectation, marked every brow. Vivaldi was about to exclaim, " That is my informer !" when the voice of the ſtranger checked him.

" Doſt thou know me ?" ſaid he ſternly, to Schedoni, and his attitude became fixed.

Schedoni gave no reply.

" Doſt thou know me ?" repeated his accuſer, in a ſteady ſolemn voice.

" Know thee ?" uttered Schedoni, faintly.

" Doſt thou know this ?" cried the ſtranger, raiſing his voice, as he drew from his garment what appeared to be a dagger. " Doſt thou know theſe indelible ſtains ?" ſaid he, lifting the poniard, and with an outſtretched arm, pointing it towards Schedoni.

The confeſſor turned away his face ; it ſeemed as if his heart ſickened.

" With this dagger was thy brother ſlain !" ſaid the terrible ſtranger. " Shall I declare myſelf ?"

Schedoni's courage forſook him, and he ſunk againſt a pillar of the hall for ſupport.

The conſternation was now general ; the extraordinary appearance and conduct of the ſtranger ſeemed to ſtrike the greater part of the tribunal, a tribunal of the inquiſition itſelf ! with diſmay. Several of the members roſe from their ſeats ; others

others called aloud for the officials, who kept guard at the doors of the hall, and inquired who had admitted the ſtranger, while the vicar-general and a few inquiſitors converſed privately together, during which they frequently looked at the ſtranger and at Schedoni, as if they were the ſubjects of the diſcourſe. Meanwhile the monk remained with the dagger in his graſp, and his eyes fixed on the Confeſſor, whoſe face was ſtill averted, and who yet ſupported himſelf againſt the pillar.

At length, the vicar-general called upon the members who had ariſen to return to their ſeats, and ordered that the officials ſhould withdraw to their poſts.

"Holy brethren!" ſaid the vicar, "we recommend to you, at this important hour, ſilence and deliberation. Let the examination of the accuſed proceed; and hereafter let us inquire as to the admittance of the accuſer. For the preſent, ſuffer him alſo to have hearing, and the father Schedoni to reply.

"We ſuffer him!" anſwered the tribunal, and bowed their heads.

Vivaldi, who, during the tumult, had ineffectually endeavoured to make himſelf heard, now profited by the pauſe which followed the aſſent of the inquiſitors, to claim attention: but the inſtant he ſpoke ſeveral members impatiently bade that the examination ſhould proceed, and the grand-vicar was again obliged to command ſilence, before the requeſt of Vivaldi could be underſtood. Permiſſion to ſpeak being granted him, "That perſon," ſaid he, pointing to the ſtranger, "is the ſame who viſited me in my priſon; and the dagger the ſame he now diſplays! It was he, who commanded me to ſummon the penitentiary Anſaldo

ſaldo, and the father Schedoni. I have acquitted myſelf, and have nothing further to do in this ſtruggle."

The tribunal was again agitated, and the murmurs of private converſation again prevailed. Meanwhile Schedoni appeared to have recovered ſome degree of ſelf-command; he raiſed himſelf, and bowing to the tribunal, ſeemed preparing to ſpeak; but waited till the confuſion of ſound that filled the hall ſhould ſubſide. At length he could be heard, and, addreſſing the tribunal, he ſaid,

"Holy fathers! the ſtranger who is now before you is an impoſtor! I will prove that my accuſer was once my friend;—you may perceive how much the diſcovery of his perfidy affects me. The charge he brings is moſt falſe and malicious!"

"*Once* thy friend!" replied the ſtranger, with peculiar emphaſis, "and what has made me thy enemy! View theſe ſpots," he continued, pointing to the blade of the poniard, "are they alſo falſe and malicious? are they not, on the contrary, reflected on thy conſcience?"

"I know them not," replied Schedoni, "my conſcience is unſtained."

"A brother's blood *has* ſtained it!" ſaid the ſtranger, in a hollow voice.

Vivaldi, whoſe attention was now fixed upon Schedoni, obſerved a livid hue over-ſpread his complexion, and that his eyes were averted from this extraordinary perſon with horror: the ſpectre of his deceaſed brother could ſcarcely have called forth a ſtronger expreſſion. It was not immediately that he could command his voice; when he could, he again appealed to the tribunal,

"Holy

" Holy fathers!" ſaid he, " ſuffer me to defend myſelf."

" Holy fathers!" ſaid the accuſer, with ſolemnity, " hear! hear what I ſhall unfold!"

Schedoni, who ſeemed to ſpeak by a ſtrong effort only, again addreſſed the inquiſitors; " I will prove," ſaid he, " that this evidence is not of a nature to be truſted."

" I will bring *ſuch* proof to the contrary!" ſaid the monk. " And here," pointing to Anſaldo, " is ſufficient teſtimony that the Count di Bruno did confeſs himſelf guilty of murder."

The court commanded ſilence, and upon the appeal of the ſtranger to Anſaldo, the penitentiary was aſked whether he knew him. He replied, that he did not.

" Recollect yourſelf," ſaid the grand inquiſitor, " it is of the utmoſt conſequence that you ſhould be correct on this point."

The penitentiary obſerved the ſtranger with deep attention, and then repeated his aſſertion.

" Have you never ſeen him before?". ſaid an inquiſitor.

" Never, to my knowledge!" replied Anſaldo.

The inquiſitors looked upon each other in ſilence.

" He ſpeaks the truth," ſaid the ſtranger.

This extraordinary fact did not fail to ſtrike the tribunal, and to aſtoniſh Vivaldi. Since the accuſer confirmed it, Vivaldi was at a loſs to underſtand the means by which he could have become acquainted with the guilt of Schedoni, who, it was not to be ſuppoſed, would have acknowledged crimes of ſuch magnitude as thoſe contained in the accuſation, to any perſon, except, indeed, to his confeſſor, and this confeſſor, it appeared,

was

was ſo far from having betrayed his truſt to the accuſer, that he did not even know him. Vivaldi was no leſs perplexed as to what would be the nature of the teſtimony with which the accuſer deſigned to ſupport his charges; but the pauſe of general amazement, which had permitted Vivaldi theſe conſiderations, was now at an end; the tribunal reſumed the examination, and the grand inquiſitor called aloud,

"You, Vincentio di Vivaldi, anſwer with exactneſs to the queſtions that ſhall be put to you."

He was then aſked ſome queſtions relative to the perſon, who had viſited him in priſon. In his anſwers, Vivaldi was clear and conciſe, conſtantly affirming, that the ſtranger was the ſame, who now accuſed Schedoni.

When the accuſer was interrogated, he acknowledged, without heſitation, that Vivaldi had ſpoken the truth. He was then aſked his motive for that extraordinary viſit.

"It was," replied the monk, "that a murderer might be brought to juſtice."

"This," obſerved the grand inquiſitor, "might have been accompliſhed by fair and open accuſation. If you had known the charge to be juſt, it is probable that you would have appealed directly to this tribunal, inſtead of endeavouring inſidiouſly to obtain an influence over the mind of a priſoner, and urging him to become the inſtrument of bringing the accuſed to puniſhment."

"Yet I have not ſhrunk from diſcovery," obſerved the ſtranger, calmly; "I have voluntarily appeared."

At theſe words, Schedoni ſeemed again much agitated, and even drew his hood over his eyes.

"That

" That is juſt," ſaid the grand inquiſitor, addreſſing the ſtranger: " but you have neither declared your name, or whence you come!"

To this remark the monk made no reply; but Schedoni, with reviving ſpirit, urged the circumſtance, in evidence of the malignity and falſhood of the accuſer.

" Wilt thou compel me to reveal my proof?" ſaid the ſtranger: " Dareſt thou to do ſo?"

" Why ſhould I fear thee?" anſwered Schedoni.

" Aſk thy conſcience!" ſaid the ſtranger, with a terrible frown.

The tribunal again ſuſpended the examination, and conſulted in private together.

To the laſt exhortation of the monk, Schedoni was ſilent. Vivaldi obſerved, that during this ſhort dialogue, the Confeſſor had never once turned his eyes towards the ſtranger, but apparently avoided him, as an object too affecting to be looked upon. He judged, from this circumſtance, and from ſome other appearances in his conduct, that Schedoni was guilty; yet the conſciouſneſs of guilt alone did not perfectly account, he thought, for the ſtrong emotion, with which he avoided the ſight of his accuſer—unleſs, indeed, he knew that accuſer to have been, not only an accomplice in his crime, but the actual aſſaſſin. In this caſe, it appeared natural even for the ſtern and ſubtle Schedoni to betray his horror, on beholding the perſon of the murderer, with the very inſtrument of crime in his graſp. On the other hand, Vivaldi could not but perceive it to be highly improbable, that the very man who had really committed the deed ſhould come voluntarily into a court of juſtice, for the purpoſe of accuſing his employer; that he ſhould dare publicly to accuſe him

him, whoſe guilt, however enormous, was not more ſo than his own.

The extraordinary manner, alſo, in which the accuſer had proceeded in the commencement of the affair, engaged Vivaldi's conſideration; his apparent reluctance to be ſeen in this proceſs, and the artful and myſterious plan by which he had cauſed Schedoni to be ſummoned before the tribunal, and had endeavoured that he ſhould be there accuſed by Anſaldo, indicated, at leaſt to Vivaldi's apprehenſion, the fearfulneſs of guilt, and, ſtill more, that malice, and a thirſt of vengeance, had inſtigated his conduct in the proſecution. If the ſtranger had been actuated only by a love of juſtice, it appeared that he would not have proceeded toward it in a way thus dark and circuitous, but have ſought it by the uſual proceſs, and have produced the proofs, which he even now aſſerted he poſſeſſed, of Schedoni's crimes. In addition to the circumſtances, which ſeemed to ſtrengthen a ſuppoſition of the guiltleſsneſs of Schedoni, was that of the accuſer's avoiding to acknowledge who he was, and whence he came. But Vivaldi paused again upon this point; it appeared to be inexplicable, and he could not imagine why the accuſer had adopted a ſtyle of ſecrecy, which, if he perſiſted in it, muſt probably defeat the very purpoſe of the accuſation; for Vivaldi did not believe that the tribunal would condemn a priſoner upon the teſtimony of a perſon who, when called upon, ſhould publicly refuſe to reveal himſelf, even to them. Yet the accuſer muſt certainly have conſidered this circumſtance before he ventured into court; notwithſtanding which, he had appeared!

Theſe reflections led Vivaldi to various conjectures relative to the viſit he had himſelf received from the monk, the dream that had preceded it, the extraordinary means by which he had obtained admittance to the priſon, the declaration of the centinals, that not any perſon had paſſed the door, and many other unaccountable particulars; and while Vivaldi now looked upon the wild phyſiognomy of the ſtranger, he almoſt fancied, as he had formerly done, that he beheld ſomething not of this earth.

"I have heard of the ſpirit of the murdered," ſaid he, to himſelf—"reſtleſs for juſtice, becoming viſible in our world ——" But Vivaldi checked the imperfect thought, and, though his imagination inclined him to the marvellous, and to admit ideas which, filling and expanding all the faculties of the ſoul, produce feelings that partake of the ſublime, he now reſiſted the propenſity, and diſmiſſed, as abſurd, a ſuppoſition, which had begun to thrill his every nerve with horror. He awaited, however, the reſult of the examination, and what might be the further conduct of the ſtranger, with intenſe expectation.

When the tribunal had, at length, finally determined on the method of their proceedings, Schedoni was firſt called upon, and examined as to his knowledge of the accuſer." It was the ſame inquiſitor who had formerly interrogated Vivaldi, that now ſpoke. "You, father Schedoni, a monk of the Spirito Santo convent, at Naples, otherwiſe Ferando Count di Bruno, anſwer to the queſtions which ſhall be put to you. Do you know the name of this man who now appears as your accuſer?"

"I anſwer not to the title of Count di Bruno," replied the Confeſſor, "but I will declare that I know this man. His name is Nicola di Zampari."

"What is his condition?"

"He is a monk of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo," replied Schedoni. "Of his family I know little."

"Where have you ſeen him?"

"In the city of Naples, where he has reſided, during ſome years, beneath the ſame roof with me, when I was of the convent of San Angiolo, and ſince that time, in the Spirito Santo."

"You have been a reſident at the San Angiolo?" ſaid the inquiſitor.

"I have," replied Schedoni; "and it was there that we firſt lived together in the confidence of friendſhip."

"You now perceive how ill placed was that confidence," ſaid the inquiſitor, "and repent, no doubt, of your imprudence?"

The wary Schedoni was not entrapped by this obſervation.

"I muſt lament a diſcovery of ingratitude," he replied, calmly, "but the ſubjects of my confidence were too pure to give occaſion for repentance."

"This Nicola di Zampari was ungrateful, then? You had rendered him ſervices?" ſaid the inquiſitor.

"The cauſe of his enmity I can well explain," obſerved Schedoni, evading, for the preſent, the queſtion.

"Explain," ſaid the ſtranger, ſolemnly.

Schedoni heſitated; ſome ſudden conſideration ſeemed to occaſion him perplexity.

"I call

"I call upon you, in the name of your deceaſed brother," ſaid the accuſer, "to reveal the cauſe of my enmity!"

Vivaldi, ſtruck by the tone in which the ſtranger ſpoke this, turned his eyes upon him, but knew not how to interpret the emotion viſible on his countenance.

The inquiſitor commanded Schedoni to explain himſelf; the latter could not immediately reply, but, when he recovered a ſelf-command he added,

"I promiſed this accuſer, this Nicola di Zampari, to aſſiſt his preferment with what little intereſt I poſſeſſed; it was but little. Some ſucceeding circumſtances encouraged me to believe that I could more than fulfil my promiſe. His hopes were elevated, and in the fulneſs of expectation—he was diſappointed, for I was myſelf deceived, by the perſon in whom I had truſted. To the diſappointment of a choleric man, I am to attribute this unjuſt accuſation."

Schedoni pauſed, and an air of diſſatisfaction and anxiety appeared upon his features. His accuſer remained ſilent, but a malicious ſmile announced his triumph.

"You muſt declare, alſo, the ſervices," ſaid the inquiſitor, "which merited the reward you promiſed."

"Thoſe ſervices were ineſtimable to me," reſumed Schedoni, after a momentary heſitation; "though they coſt di Zampari little: they were the conſolations of ſympathy, the intelligence of friendſhip, which he adminiſtered, and which gratitude told me never could be repaid."

" Of ſympathy! of friendſhip!" ſaid the grand-vicar. Are we to believe that a man, who brings falſe accuſation of ſo dreadful a nature as the one now before us, is capable of beſtowing the conſolations of ſympathy, and of friendſhip? You muſt either acknowledge, that ſervices of a leſs diſintereſted nature won your promiſes of reward; or we muſt conclude that your accuſer's charge is juſt. Your aſſertions are inconſiſtent, and your explanation too trivial, to deceive for a moment."

" I have declared the truth," ſaid Schedoni, haughtily.

" In which inſtance?" aſked the the inquiſitor; " for your aſſertions contradict each other!

Schedoni was ſilent. Vivaldi could not judge whether the pride which occaſioned his ſilence was that of innocence or of remorſe.

" It appears from your own teſtimony," ſaid the inquiſitor, " that the ingratitude was your's, not your accuſer's, ſince he conſoled you with kindneſs, which you have never returned him!—Have you any thing further to ſay?"

Schedoni was ſtill ſilent.

" This, then, is your only explanation?" added the inquiſitor.

Schedoni bowed his head. The inquiſitor then addreſſing the accuſer, demanded what he had to reply.

" I have nothing to reply," ſaid the ſtranger with malicious triumph; " the accuſed has replied for me!"

" We are to conclude, then, that he has ſpoken truth, when he aſſerted you to be a monk of the Spirito Santo, at Naples? ſaid the inquiſitor.

" Yo

" You, holy father," ſaid the ſtranger, gravely, appealing to the inquiſitor, " can anſwer for me, whether I am."

Vivaldi liſtened with emotion.

The inquiſitor roſe from his chair, and with ſolemnity replied, " I anſwer, then, that you are not a monk of Naples."

" By that reply," ſaid the vicar-general, in a low voice to the inquiſitor, " I perceive you think father Schedoni is guilty."

The rejoinder of the inquiſitor was delivered in ſo low a tone that Vivaldi could not underſtand it. He was perplexed to interpret the anſwer given to the appeal of the ſtranger. He thought that the inquiſitor would not have ventured an aſſertion thus poſitive, if his opinion had been drawn from inference only; and that he ſhould know the accuſer, while he was conducting himſelf towards him as a ſtranger, amazed Vivaldi, no leſs than if he had underſtood the character of an inquiſitor to be as artleſs as his own. On the other hand he had ſo frequently ſeen the ſtranger at Paluzzi, and in the habit of a monk, that he could hardly queſtion the aſſertion of Schedoni, as to his identity.

The inquiſitor, addreſſing Schedoni, ſaid, " Your evidence we know to be in part erroneous; your accuſer is not a monk of Naples, but a ſervant of the moſt holy Inquiſition. Judging from this part of your evidence, we muſt ſuſpect the whole."

" A ſervant of the Inquiſition!" exclaimed Schedoni, with unaffected ſurprize. " Reverend father! your aſſertion aſtoniſhes me! You are deceived, however ſtrange it may appear, truſt me, you are deceived! You doubt the credit of

my word; I, therefore, will aſſert no more. But inquire of Signor Vivaldi; aſk him, whether he has not often, and lately, ſeen my accuſer at Naples, and in the habit of a monk."

"I have ſeen him at the ruins of Paluzzi, near Naples, and in the eccleſiaſtical dreſs," replied Vivaldi, without waiting for the regular queſtion, "and under circumſtances no leſs extraordinary than thoſe which have attended him here. But, in return for this frank acknowledgment, I require of you, father Schedoni, to anſwer ſome queſtions which I ſhall venture to ſuggeſt to the tribunal—By what means were you informed that I have often ſeen the ſtranger at Paluzzi—and was you intereſted or not in his myſterious conduct towards me there?"

To theſe queſtions, though formally delivered from the tribunal, Schedoni did not deign to reply.

"It appears, then," ſaid the vicar-general, "that the accuſer and the accuſed were once accomplices."

The inquiſitor objected, that this did not certainly appear; and that, on the contrary, Schedoni ſeemed to have given his laſt queſtions in deſpair; an obſervation which Vivaldi thought extraordinary from an inquiſitor.

"Be it *accomplices*, if it ſo pleaſe you," ſaid Schedoni, bowing to the grand vicar, without noticing the inquiſitor: "you may call us accomplices, but I ſay, that we were *friends*. Since it is neceſſary to my own peace, that I ſhould more fully explain ſome circumſtances attending our intimacy, I will own that my accuſer was occaſionally my agent, and aſſiſted in preſerving the dignity of an illuſtrious family at Naples, the family

mily of the Vivaldi. And there, holy father," added Schedoni, pointing to Vincentio, "is the ſon of that ancient houſe, for whom I have attempted ſo much!"

Vivaldi was almoſt overwhelmed by this confeſſion of Schedoni, though he had already ſuſpected a part of the truth. In the ſtranger he believed he ſaw the ſlanderer of Ellena, the baſe inſtrument of the Marcheſa's policy, and of Schedoni's ambition; and the whole of his conduct at Paluzzi, at leaſt, ſeemed now intelligible. In Schedoni he beheld his ſecret accuſer, and the inexorable enemy whom he believed to have occaſioned the impriſonment of Ellena. At this latter conſideration, all circumſpection, all prudence forſook him: he declared, with energy, that, from what Schedoni had juſt acknowledged to be his conduct, he knew him for his ſecret accuſer, and the accuſer, alſo, of Ellena di Roſalba; and he called upon the tribunal to examine into the Confeſſor's motives for the accuſation, and afterwards to give hearing to what he would himſelf unfold.

To this, the grand-vicar replied, that Vivaldi's appeal would be taken into conſideration; and he then ordered that the preſent buſineſs ſhould proceed.

The inquiſitor, addreſſing Schedoni, ſaid, "The diſintereſted nature of your friendſhip is now ſufficiently explained, and the degree of credit, which is due to your late aſſertions underſtood. Of you we aſk no more, but turn to father Nicola di Zampari, and demand what he has to ſay in ſupport of his accuſation. What are your proofs, Nicola di Zampari, that he who calls himſelf father Schedoni is Ferando Count di Bruno; and that he has been guilty of murder,

the murder of his brother, and of his wife? Answer to our charge!"

"To your first question," said the monk, "I reply that he has himself acknowledged to me, on an occasion, which it is not necessary to mention, that he was the Count di Bruno; to the last, I produce the poniard which I received, with the dying confession of the assassin whom he employed."

"Still, these are not proofs, but assertions," observed the vicar-general, "and the first forbids our confidence in the second.—If, as you declare, Schedoni himself acknowledged to you that he was Count di Bruno, you must have been to him the intimate friend he has declared you were, or he would not have confided to you a secret so dangerous to himself. And, if you were that friend, what confidence ought we to give to your assertions respecting the dagger? since, whether your accusations be true or false, you prove yourself guilty of treachery in bringing them forward at all."

Vivaldi was surprized to hear such candour from an inquisitor.

"Here is my proof," said the stranger, who now produced a paper, containing what he asserted to be the dying confession of the assassin. It was signed by a priest of Rome, as well as by himself, and appeared from the date to have been given only a very few weeks before. The priest, he said, was living, and might be summoned. The tribunal issued an order for the apprehension of this priest, and that he should be brought to give evidence on the following evening; after which, the business of this night proceeded, without further interruption, towards its conclusion.

The

The vicar-general ſpoke again, "Nicola di Zampari, I call upon you to ſay, why, if your proof of Schedoni's guilt is ſo clear, as the confeſſion of the aſſaſſin himſelf muſt make it,—why you thought it neceſſary to ſummon father Anſaldo to atteſt the criminality of the Count di Bruno? the dying confeſſion of the aſſaſſin is certainly of more weight than any other evidence."

"I ſummoned the father Anſaldo," replied the ſtranger, "as a means of proving that Schedoni is the Count di Bruno. The confeſſion of the aſſaſſin ſufficiently proves the Count to have been the inſtigator of the murder, but not that Schedoni is the Count."

"But that is more than I will engage to prove," replied Anſaldo, "I know it was the Count di Bruno who confeſſed to me, but I do not know that the father Schedoni, who is now before me, was the perſon who ſo confeſſed."

"Conſcientiouſly obſerved!" ſaid the vicar-general, interrupting the ſtranger, who was about to reply, but you, Nicola di Zampari, have not on this head been ſufficiently explicit.—How do you know that Schedoni is the penitent who confeſſed to Anſaldo on the vigil of San Marco?"

"Reverend father, that is the point I was about to explain," replied the monk. "I myſelf accompanied Schedoni, on the eve of San Marco, to the church of the *Santa Maria del Pianto*, at the very hour when the confeſſion is ſaid to have been made. Schedoni told me he was going to confeſſion; and, when I obſerved to him his unuſual agitation, his behaviour implied a conſciouſneſs of extraordinary guilt; he even betrayed it by ſome words which he dropt in the

confuſion of his mind. I parted with him at the gates of the church. He was then of an order of white friars, and habited as father Anſaldo has deſcribed. Within a few weeks after this confeſſion, he left his convent, for what reaſon I never could learn, though I have often ſurmiſed it, and came to reſide at the Spirito Santo, whither I alſo had removed."

"Here is no proof," ſaid the vicar-general, "other friars of that order might confeſs at the ſame hour, in the ſame church."

"But here is ſtrong preſumption for proof," obſerved the inquiſitor. "Holy father, we muſt judge from probabilities, as well as from proof."

"But probabilities themſelves," replied the vicar-general, are ſtrongly againſt the evidence of a man, who would betray another by means of words dropped in the unguarded moments of powerful emotion."

"Are theſe the ſentiments of an inquiſitor!" ſaid Vivaldi to himſelf, "can ſuch glorious candour appear amidſt the tribunal of an Inquiſition!" Tears fell faſt on Vivaldi's cheek while he gazed upon this juſt judge, whoſe candour, had it been exerted in his cauſe, could not have excited more powerful ſenſations of eſteem and admiration. "An inquiſitor!" he repeated to himſelf, "an inquiſitor!"

The inferior inquiſitor, however, was ſo far from poſſeſſing any congeniality of character with his ſuperior, that he was evidently diſappointed by the appearance of liberality, which the vicar-general diſcovered, and immediately ſaid, "Has the accuſer any thing further to urge in evidence, that the father Schedoni is the penitent, who confeſſed to the penitentiary Anſaldo?"

"I have"

"I have," replied the monk, with aſperity. "When I had left Schedoni in the church, I lingered without the walls for his return, according to appointment. But he appeared conſiderably ſooner than I expected, and in a ſtate of diſorder, ſuch as I had never witneſſed in him before. In an inſtant he paſſed me, nor could my voice arreſt his progreſs. Confuſion ſeemed to reign within the church and the convent, and, when I would have entered, for the purpoſe of inquiring the occaſion of it, the gates were ſuddenly cloſed, and all entrance forbidden. It has ſince appeared, that the monks were then ſearching for the penitent. A rumour afterwards reached me, that a confeſſion had cauſed this diſturbance; that the father-confeſſor, who happened at that time to be the grand penitentiary Anſaldo, had left the chair in horror of what had been divulged from the grate, and had judged it neceſſary that a ſearch ſhould be made for the penitent, who was a white friar. This report, reverend fathers, excited general attention; with me it did more—for I thought I knew the penitent. When on the following day, I queſtioned Schedoni as to his ſudden departure from the church of the Black Penitents, his anſwers were dark, but emphatic, and he extorted from me a promiſe, thoughtleſs that I was! never to diſcloſe his viſit of the preceding evening to the *Santa del Pianto*. I then certainly diſcovered who was the penitent."

"Did he, then, confeſs to you alſo?" ſaid the Vicar-general.

"No father. I underſtood him to be the penitent to whom the report alluded, but I had no ſuſpicion of the nature of his crimes, till the aſſaſſin

aſſaſſin began his confeſſion, the concluſion of which clearly explained the ſubject of Schedoni's; it explained alſo his motive for endeavouring ever after to attach me to his intereſt."

"You have now, ſaid the Vicar-general, "you have now, confeſſed yourſelf a member of the convent of the Spirito Santo at Naples, and an intimate of the father Schedoni; one whom for many years he has endeavoured to attach to him. Not an hour has paſſed ſince you denied all this; the negative to the latter circumſtance was given, it is true, by implication only; but to the firſt a direct and abſolute denial was pronounced!"

"I denied that I *am* a monk of Naples," replied the accuſer, "and I appealed to the Inquiſitor for the truth of my denial. He has ſaid, that I am now a ſervant of the moſt holy Inquiſition."

The Vicar-general, with ſome ſurpriſe, looked at the Inquiſitor for explanation; other members of the tribunal did the ſame; the reſt appeared to underſtand more than they had thought it neceſſary to avow. The Inquiſitor, who had been called upon, roſe, and replied,

"Nicola di Zampari has ſpoken the truth. It is not many weeks ſince he entered the holy office. A certificate from his convent at Naples bears teſtimony to the truth of what I advance, and procured him admittance here."

"It is extraordinary that you ſhould not have diſcloſed your knowledge of this perſon before!" ſaid the Vicar-general.

"Holy father, I had reaſons," replied the Inquiſitor, "you will recollect that the accuſed was preſent, and you will underſtand them."

"I com-

" I comprehend you," ſaid the vicar-general, " but I do neither approve of, nor perceive any neceſſity for your countenancing the ſubterfuge of this Nicola di Zampari, relative to his identity. But more of this in private."

" I will explain all there," anſwered the inquiſitor.

" It appears then," reſumed the vicar-general, ſpeaking aloud, " that this Nicola di Zampari was formerly the friend and confidant of father Schedoni, whom he now accuſes. The accuſation is evidently malicious; whether it be alſo falſe, remains to be decided. A material queſtion naturally ariſes out of the ſubject—Why was not the accuſation brought forward before this period?"

The monk's viſage brightened with the ſatisfaction of anticipated triumph, and he immediately replied,

" Moſt holy father! as ſoon as I aſcertained the crime, I prepared to proſecute the perpretator of of it. A ſhort period only has elapſed ſince the aſſaſſin gave his confeſſion. In this interval I diſcovered, in theſe priſons, Signor Vivaldi, and immediately comprehended by whoſe means he was confined. I knew enough both of the accuſer and accuſed, to underſtand which of theſe was innocent, and had then a double motive for cauſing Schedoni to be ſummoned;—I wiſhed equally to deliver the innocent and puniſh the criminal. The queſtion as to the motive for my becoming the enemy of him, who was once my friend, is already anſwered;—it was a ſenſe of juſtice, not a ſuggeſtion of malice."

The grand vicar ſmiled, but aſked no further; and this long examination concluded with committing Schedoni again into cloſe cuſtody, till full evidence

evidence ſhould be obtained of his guilt, or his innocence ſhould appear. Reſpecting the manner of his wife's death, there was yet no other evidence than that which was aſſerted to be his own confeſſion, which, though perhaps ſufficient to condemn a criminal before the tribunal of the Inquiſition, was not enough to ſatisfy the preſent vicar-general, who gave direction that means might be employed towards obtaining proof of each article of the accuſation; in order that, ſhould Schedoni be acquitted of the charge of having murdered his brother, documents might appear for proſecuting him reſpecting the death of his wife.

Schedoni, when he withdrew from the hall, bowed reſpectfully to the tribunal, and whether, notwithſtanding late appearances, he were innocent, or that ſubtlety enabled him to reaſſume his uſual addreſs, it is certain his manner no longer betrayed any ſymptom of conſcious guilt. His countenance was firm and even tranquil, and his air dignified. Vivaldi, who, during the greater part of this examination, had been convinced of his criminality, now only doubted his innocence. Vivaldi was himſelf reconducted to his priſon, and the ſitting of the tribunal was diſſolved.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

"The time ſhall come when Glo'ſter's heart ſhall bleed
In life's laſt hours with horrors of the deed;
When dreary viſions ſhall at laſt preſent
Thy vengeful image." ——

COLLINS.

WHEN the night of Schedoni's trial arrived, Vivaldi was again ſummoned to the hall of the tribunal. Every circumſtance was now arranged according to the full ceremonies of the place; the members of the tribunal were more numerous than formerly at the examinations; the chief inquiſitors wore habits of a faſhion different from thoſe, which before diſtinguiſhed them, and their turbans, of a ſingular form and larger ſize, ſeemed to give an air of ſterner ferocity to their features. The hall, as uſual, was hung with black, and every perſon who appeared there, whether inquiſitor, official, witneſs or priſoner, was habited in the ſame diſmal hue, which, together with the kind of light diffuſed through the chamber from lamps hung high in the vaulted roof, and from torches held by parties of officials who kept watch at the ſeveral doors, and in different parts of this immenſe hall, gave a character of gloomy ſolemnity to the aſſembly, which was almoſt horrific.

Vivaldi was ſituated in a place, whence he beheld the whole of the tribunal, and could diſtinguiſh whatever was paſſing in the hall. The countenance

countenance of every member was now fully diſplayed to him by the torchmen, who, arranged at the ſteps of the platform on which the three chief inquiſitors were elevated, extended in a ſemicircle on either hand of the place occupied by the inferior members. The red glare, which the torches threw upon the latter, certainly did not ſoften the expreſſion of faces, for the moſt part ſculptured by paſſions of dark malignity, or fiercer cruelty? and Vivaldi could not bear even to examine them long.

Before the bar of the tribunal, he diſtinguiſhed Schedoni, and little did he ſuſpect, that in him, a criminal brought thither to anſwer for the guilt of murder—the murder of a brother, and of a wife, he beheld the parent of Ellena di Roſalba!

Near Schedoni was ſeated the penitentiary Anſaldo; the Roman prieſt, who was to be a principal witneſs, and father Nicola di Zampari, upon whom Vivaldi could not even now look without experiencing ſomewhat of the awe, which had prevailed over his mind when he was inclined to conſider the ſtranger, rather as the viſion of another world, than as a being of this. The ſame wild and indeſcribable character ſtill diſtinguiſhed his air, his every look and movement, and Vivaldi could not but believe that ſomething in the higheſt degree extraordinary would yet be diſcovered concerning him.

The witneſſes being called over, Vivaldi underſtood that he was placed among them, though he had only repeated the words which father Nicola had ſpoken, and which, ſince Nicola himſelf was preſent as a witneſs againſt

gainſt Schedoni, he did not perceive could be in the leaſt material on the trial.

When Vivaldi had, in his turn, anſwered to his name, a voice, burſting forth from a diſtant part of the hall, exclaimed, "It is my maſter! my *dear* maſter!" and on directing his eyes whence it came, he perceived the faithful Paulo ſtruggling with his guard. Vivaldi called to him to be patient, and to forbear reſiſtance, an exhortation, however, which ſerved only to increaſe the efforts of the ſervant for liberty, and in the next inſtant he broke from the graſp of the officials, and darting towards Vivaldi, fell at his feet, ſobbing, and claſping his knees, and exclaiming, "O my maſter! my maſter! have I found you at laſt?"

Vivaldi, as much affected by this meeting as Paulo, could not immediately ſpeak. He would, however, have raiſed and embraced his affectionate ſervant, but Paulo, ſtill clinging to his knees and ſobbing, was ſo much agitated that he ſcarcely underſtood any thing ſaid to him, and to the kind aſſurances and gentle remonſtrances of Vivaldi conſtantly replied as if to the officers, whom he fancied to be forcing him away.

"Remember your ſituation, Paulo," ſaid Vivaldi, "conſider mine alſo, and be governed by prudence."

"You ſhall not force me hence!" cried Paulo, "you can take my life only once; if I muſt die, it ſhall be here."

"Recollect yourſelf, Paulo, and be compoſed. Your life, I truſt, is in no danger."

Paulo looked up, and again burſting into a paſſion of tears, repeated, "O! my maſter! my maſter!

where

where have you been all this while? are you indeed alive? I thought I never ſhould ſee you again! I have dreamt an hundred times that you were dead and buried! and I wiſhed to be dead and buried with you. I thought you was gone out of this world into the next. I feared you was gone to heaven, and ſo believed we ſhould never meet again. But now, I ſee you once more, and know that you live! O! my maſter! my maſter!"

The officers who had followed Paulo, now endeavouring to withdraw him, he became more outrageous.

"Do your worſt at once," ſaid he; "but you ſhall find tough work of it, if you try to force me from hence; ſo you had better be contented with killing me here."

The incenſed officials were laying violent hands upon him, when Vivaldi interpoſed. "I entreat, I ſupplicate you, ſaid he, "that you will ſuffer him to remain near me."

"It is impoſſible," replied an officer, "we dare not."

"I will promiſe that he ſhall not even ſpeak to me, if you will only allow him to be near," added Vivaldi.

"Not ſpeak to you, maſter!" exclaimed Paulo, "but I will ſtay by you, and ſpeak to you as long as I like, till my laſt gaſp. Let them do their worſt at once; I defy them all, and all the devils of inquiſitors at their heels too, to force me away. I can die but once, and they ought to be ſatisfied with that,—ſo what is there to be afraid of? Not ſpeak!"

"He knows not what he ſays," ſaid Vivaldi to the officials, while he endeavoured to ſilence Paulo

Paulo with his hand, I am certain that he will ſubmit to whatever I ſhall require of him, and will be entirely ſilent; or if he does ſpeak now and then, it ſhall be only in a whiſper."

"A whiſper!" ſaid an officer ſneeringly, "do you ſuppoſe Signor, that any perſon is ſuffered to ſpeak in a whiſper here?"

"A whiſper!" ſhouted Paulo, "I ſcorn to ſpeak in a whiſper. I will ſpeak ſo loud, that every word I ſay ſhall ring in the ears of all thoſe old black devils on the benches yonder; aye, and thoſe on that mountebank ſtage too, that ſit there looking ſo grim and angry as if they longed to tear us in pieces. They"———

"Silence," ſaid Vivaldi with emphaſis, "Paulo, I command you to be ſilent."

"They ſhall know a bit of my mind," continued Paulo, without noticing Vivaldi, "I will tell them what they have to expect for all their cruel uſage of my poor maſter. Where do they expect to go when they die, I wonder? Though for that matter, they cannot go to a worſe place than they are in already, and I ſuppoſe it is, knowing that, which makes them not afraid of being ever ſo wicked. They ſhall hear a little plain truth, for once in their lives, however, they ſhall hear"———

During the whole of this harangue, Vivaldi, alarmed for the conſequence of ſuch imprudent, though honeſt indignation, had been uſing all poſſible effort to ſilence him, and was the more alarmed, ſince the officials made no further attempt to interrupt Paulo, a forbearance, which Vivaldi attributed to malignity, and to a wiſh that Paulo might be entrapped by his own act. At length he made himſelf heard.

I *entreat*,"

"I *entreat*," ſaid Vivaldi.

Paulo ſtopped for a moment.

"Paulo!" rejoined Vivaldi earneſtly, "do you love your maſter?"

"Love my maſter!" ſaid Paulo reſentfully, without allowing Vivaldi to finiſh his ſentence, "Have I not gone through fire and water for him? or, what is as good, have I not put myſelf into the Inquiſition, and all on his account? and now to be aſked, 'Do I love my maſter!' If you believe, Signor, that any thing elſe nade me come here, into theſe diſmal holes, you are quite entirely out; and when they have made an end of me, as I ſuppoſe they will do, before all is over, you will perhaps, think better of me than to ſuſpect that I came here for my own pleaſure."

"All that may be as you ſay, Paulo," replied Vivaldi coldly, while he with difficulty commanded his tears, "but your immediate ſubmiſſion is the only conduct that can convince me of the ſincerity of your profeſſions. I *entreat* you to be ſilent."

"*Entreat* me!" ſaid Paulo, "O my maſter! what have I done that it ſhould come to this? *Entreat* me!" he repeated, ſobbing.

"You will then give me this proof of your attachment?" aſked Vivaldi.

"Do not uſe ſuch a heart-breaking word again, maſter," replied Paulo, while he daſhed the tears from his cheek, "ſuch a heart-breaking word, and I will do any thing."

"You ſubmit to what I require then, Paulo?"

"Aye, Signor, if—if it is even to kneel at the feet of that devil of an inquiſitor, yonder."

"I ſhall

"I ſhall only require you to be ſilent," replied Vivaldi, "and you may then be permitted to remain near me."

"Well, Signor, well; I will do as you bid me, then, and only juſt ſay"—

"Not a ſyllable! Paulo," interrupted Vivaldi.

"Only juſt ſay, maſter"——

"Not a word, I entreat you!" added Vivaldi, "or you will be removed immediately."

"His removal does not depend on that," ſaid one of the officials, breaking from his watchful ſilence, "he muſt go, and that without more delay."

"What! after I have promiſed not to open my lips!" ſaid Paulo, "do you pretend to break your agreement?"

"There *is* no pretence, and there *was* no agreement," replied the man ſharply, ſo obey directly, or it will be the worſe for you."

The officials were provoked, and Paulo became ſtill more enraged and clamorous, till at length the uproar reached the tribunal at the other end of the hall, and ſilence having been commanded, an inquiry was made into the cauſe of the confuſion. The conſequence of this was, an order that Paulo ſhould withdraw from Vivaldi; but as at this moment he feared no greater evil, he gave his refuſal to the tribunal with as little ceremony as he had done before to the officials.

At length, after much difficulty, a ſort of compromiſe was made, and Paulo being ſoothed by his maſter into ſome degree of compliance, was ſuffered to remain within a ſhort diſtance of him.

The buſineſs of the trial ſoon after commenced. Anſaldo the penitentiary, and father Nicola, appeared

peared as witneſſes, as did, alſo, the Roman prieſt, who had aſſiſted in taking the depoſitions of the dying aſſaſſin. He had been privately interrogated, and had given clear and ſatisfactory evidence as to the truth of the paper produced by Nicola. Other witneſſes, alſo, had been ſubpœnaed, whom Schedoni had no expectation of meeting.

The deportment of the Confeſſor, on firſt entering the hall, was collected and firm; it remained unchanged when the Roman prieſt was brought forward; but, on the appearance of another witneſs, his courage ſeemed to faulter. Before this evidence was, however, called for, the depoſitions of the aſſaſſin were publicly read. They ſtated, with the cloſeſt conciſeneſs, the chief facts, of which the following is a ſomewhat more dilated narrative.

It appeared, that about the year 1742, the late Count di Bruno had paſſed over into Greece, a journey which his brother, the preſent Confeſſor, having long expected, had meditated to take advantage of. Though a lawleſs paſſion had firſt ſuggeſted to the dark mind of Schedoni the atrocious act, which ſhould deſtroy a brother, many circumſtances and conſiderations had conſpired to urge him towards its accompliſhment. Among theſe was the conduct of the late Count towards himſelf, which, however reaſonable, as it had contradicted his own ſelfiſh gratifications, and added ſtrong reproof to oppoſition, had excited his moſt inveterate hatred. Schedoni, who, as a younger brother of his family, bore, at that time, the title of Count di Marinella, had diſſipated his ſmall patrimony at a very early age; but, though ſuffering might then have taught him prudence, it had only encouraged him in duplicity, and rendered him more eager to ſeek a temporary refuge

in

in the ſame habits of extravagance which had led to it. The Count di Bruno, though his fortune was very limited, had afforded frequent ſupplies to his brother; till, finding that he was incorrigible, and that the ſums which he himſelf ſpared with difficulty from his family were laviſhed, without remorſe, by Marinella, inſtead of being applied, with economy, to his ſupport, he refuſed further aid than was ſufficient for his abſolute neceſſities.

It would be difficult for a candid mind to believe how a conduct ſo reaſonable could poſſibly excite hatred in any breaſt, or that the power of ſelfiſhneſs could ſo far wrap any underſtanding, as to induce Marinella, whom we will, in future, again call Schedoni, to look upon his brother with deteſtation, becauſe he had refuſed to ruin himſelf that his kinſman might revel! Yet it is certain that Schedoni, terming the neceſſary prudence of di Bruno to be meanneſs and cold inſenſibility to the comfort of others, ſuffered full as much reſentment towards him from ſyſtem, as he did from paſſion, though the meanneſs and the inſenſibility he imagined in his brother's character were not only real traits in his own, but were diſplaying themſelves in the very arguments he urged againſt them.

The rancour thus excited was cheriſhed by innumerable circumſtances, and ripened by envy, that meaneſt and moſt malignant of the human paſſions; by envy of di Bruno's bleſſings, of an unencumbered eſtate, and of a beautiful wife, he was tempted to perpetrate the deed, which might transfer thoſe bleſſings to himſelf. Spalatro, whom he employed to this purpoſe, was well known to him, and he did not fear to confide the

conduct

conduct of the crime to this man, who was to purchaſe a little habitation on the remote ſhore of the Adriatic, and, with a certain ſtipend, to reſide there. The ruinous dwelling, to which Elena had been carried, as its ſolitary ſituation ſuited Schedoni's views, was taken for him.

Schedoni, who had good intelligence of all di Bruno's movements, acquainted Spalatro, from time to time, with his exact ſituation; and it was after di Bruno, on his return, had croſſed the Adriatic, from Raguſi to Manfredonia, and was entering upon the woods of the Garganus, that Spalatro, with his comrade, overtook him. They fired at the Count and his attendants, who were only a valet, and a guide of the country; and, concealed among the thickets, they ſecurely repeated the attack. The ſhot did not immediately ſucceed, and the Count, looking round to diſcover his enemy, prepared to defend himſelf, but the firing was ſo rapidly ſuſtained, that, at length, both di Bruno and his ſervant fell, covered with wounds. The guide fled.

The unfortunate travellers were buried by their aſſaſſins on the ſpot; but, whether the ſuſpicion which attends upon the conſciouſneſs of guilt, prompted Spalatro to guard againſt every poſſibility of being betrayed by the accomplice of his crime, or whatever was the motive, he returned to the foreſt alone; and, ſhrouded by night, removed the bodies to a pit, which he had prepared under the flooring of the houſe where he lived; thus diſplacing all proof, ſhould his accomplice hereafter point out to juſtice the ſpot in which he had aſſiſted to depoſit the mangled remains of di Bruno.

Schedoni contrived a plauſible hiſtory of the ſhipwreck of his brother upon the Adriatic, and of

of the loſs of the whole crew; and, as no perſons but the aſſaſſins were acquainted with the real cauſe of his death, the guide, who had fled, and the people at the only town he had paſſed through, ſince he landed, being ignorant even of the name of di Bruno, there was not any circumſtance to contradict the falſhood. It was univerſally credited, and even the widow of the Count had, perhaps, never doubted its truth; or if, after her compelled marriage with Schedoni, his conduct did awaken a ſuſpicion, it was too vague to produce any ſerious conſequence.

During the reading of Spalatro's confeſſion, and particularly at the concluſion of it, the ſurprize and diſmay of Schedoni were too powerful for concealment; and it was not the leaſt conſiderable part of his wonder, that Spalatro ſhould have come to Rome for the purpoſe of making theſe depoſitions; but further conſideration gave him a conjecture of the truth.

The account, which Spalatro had given of his motive for this journey to the prieſt, was, that, having lately underſtood Schedoni to be reſident at Rome, he had followed him thither, with an intention of relieving his conſcience by an acknowledgment of his own crimes, and a diſcloſure of Schedoni's. This, however, was not exactly the fact. The deſign of Spalatro was to extort money from the guilty Confeſſor; a deſign, from which the latter believed he had protected himſelf, as well as from every other evil conſequence, when he miſled his late accomplice, reſpecting his place of reſidence; little foreſeeing that the very artifice, which ſhould ſend this man in ſearch of him to Rome, inſtead of Naples, would be the means of bringing his crimes before the public.

Spalatro had followed the ſteps of Schedoni as far as the town at which he ſlept, on the firſt night of his journey; and, having there paſſed him, had reached the villa di Cambruſca, when, perceiving the Confeſſor approaching, he had taken ſhelter from obſervation, within the ruin. The motive, which before made him ſhrink from notice, had contributed, and ſtill did ſo, to a ſuſpicion that he aimed at the life of Schedoni, who, in wounding him, believed he had ſaved himſelf from an aſſaſſin. The wounds, however, of Spalatro did not ſo much diſable him, but that he proceeded towards Rome from the town whence the parting road had conducted his maſter towards Naples.

The fatigue of a long journey, performed chiefly on foot, in Spalatro's wounded condition, occaſioned a fever, that terminated together his journey and his life; and in his laſt hours he had unburdened his conſcience by a full confeſſion of his guilt. The prieſt, who, on this occaſion, had been ſent for, alarmed by the importance of the confeſſion, ſince it implicated a living perſon, called in a friend as witneſs to the depoſitions. This witneſs was father Nicola, the former intimate of Schedoni, and who was of a character to rejoice in any diſcovery, which might puniſh a man from whoſe repeated promiſes he had received only ſevere diſappointments.

Schedoni now perceived that all his deſigns againſt Spalatro had failed, and he had meditated more than have yet been fully diſcloſed. It may be remembered, that on parting with the peaſant his conductor, the Confeſſor, gave him a ſtiletto to defend him, as he ſaid, from the attack of Spalatro, in caſe of encountering him on the road. The point of this inſtrument was tipped with poi-

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ſon; ſo that a ſcratch from it was ſufficient to inflict death. Schedoni had for many years ſecretly carried about him ſuch an envenomed inſtrument, for reaſons known only to himſelf. He had hoped, that, ſhould the peaſant meet Spalatro, and be provoked to defend himſelf, this ſtiletto would terminate the life of his accomplice, and relieve him from all probability of diſcovery, ſince the other aſſaſſin, whom he employed, had been dead ſeveral years. The expedient failed in every reſpect; the peaſant did not even ſee Spalatro; and, before he reached his home, he luckily loſt the fatal ſtiletto, which, as he had diſcovered himſelf to be acquainted with ſome circumſtances connected with the crimes of Schedoni, the Confeſſor would have wiſhed him to keep, from the chance, that he might ſome time injure himſelf in uſing it. The poniard, as he had no proper means of faſtening it to his dreſs, had fallen, and was carried away by the torrent he was croſſing at that moment.

But, if Schedoni had been ſhocked by the confeſſion of the aſſaſſin, his diſmay was conſiderably greater, when a new witneſs was brought forward, and he perceived an ancient domeſtic of his houſe. This man identified Schedoni for Ferando Count di Bruno, with whom he had lived as a ſervant after the death of the Count his brother. And not only did he bear teſtimony to the perſon of Schedoni, but to the death of the Counteſs, his wife. Giovanni declared himſelf to be one of the domeſtics who had aſſiſted in conveying her to her apartment, after ſhe had been ſtruck by the poniard of Schedoni, and who had afterwards attended her funeral in the church of the Santa del Miracoli, a convent near the late reſidence of di Bruno. He further affirmed, that the phyſicians

had reported her death to be in consequence of the wound she had received, and he bore witness to the flight of his master, previous to the death of the Countess, and immediately upon the assassination, and that he had never publicly appeared upon his estate since that period.

An inquisitor asked, whether any measures had been taken by the relations of the deceased lady, toward a prosecution of the Count.

The witness replied, that a long search had been made for the Count, for such a purpose, but that he had wholly eluded discovery, and that, of course, no further step had been taken in the affair. This reply appeared to occasion dissatisfaction; the tribunal was silent, and seemed to hesitate; the vicar-general then addressed the witness.

"How can you be certain that the person now before you, calling himself father Schedoni, is the Count di Bruno, your former master, if you have never seen him during the long interval of years you mention?"

Giovanni, without hesitation, answered, that, though years had worn the features of the Count, he recollected them the moment he beheld him; and not the Count only, but the person of the penitentiary Ansaldo, whom he had seen a frequent visitor at the house of di Bruno, though his appearance, also, was considerably changed by time, and by the ecclesiastical habit which he now wore.

The vicar-general seemed still to doubt the evidence of this man, till Ansaldo himself, on being called upon, remembered him to have been a servant of the Count, though he could not identify the Count himself.

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The grand-inquiſitor remarked, that it was extraordinary he ſhould recollect the face of the ſervant, yet forget that of the maſter, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy. To this Anſaldo replied, that the ſtronger paſſions of Schedoni, together with his particular habits of life, might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to have wrought a greater change upon the features of the Count than the character and circumſtances of Giovanni's could have effected on his.

Schedoni, not without reaſon, was appalled, on the appearance of this ſervant, whoſe further teſtimony gave ſuch clearneſs and force to ſome other parts of the evidence, that the tribunal pronounced ſentence upon Schedoni, as the murderer of the Count his brother; and as this, the firſt charge, was ſufficient for his condemnation to death, they did not proceed upon the ſecond, that which related to his wife.

The emotion betrayed by Schedoni, on the appearance of the laſt witneſs, and during the delivery of the evidence, diſappeared when his fate became certain; and when the dreadful ſentence of the law was pronounced, it made no viſible impreſſion on his mind. From that moment, his firmneſs or his hardihood never forſook him.

Vivaldi, who witneſſed this condemnation, appeared infinitely more affected by it than himſelf, and, though in revealing the circumſtance of father Nicola's ſummons, which had eventually led to the diſcovery of Schedoni's crimes, he had not been left a choice in his conduct, he felt, at this moment, as miſerable as if he had actually borne witneſs againſt the life of a fellow being: what, then, would have been his feelings, had he been told that this Schedoni, thus condemned, was the father of Ellena di Roſalba! But, whatever theſe

might be, he was ſoon condemned to experience them. One of the moſt powerful of Schedoni's paſſions appeared even in this laſt ſcene; and as, in quitting the tribunal, he paſſed near Vivaldi, he uttered theſe few words—"In me you have murdered the father of Ellena di Roſalba!"

Not with any hope that the interceſſion of Vivaldi, himſelf alſo a priſoner, could in the leaſt mitigate a ſentence pronounced by the Inquiſition, did he ſay this, but for the purpoſe of revenging himſelf for the evil, which Vivaldi's evidence had contributed to produce, and inflicting the exquiſite miſery ſuch information muſt give. The attempt ſucceeded too well.

At firſt, indeed, Vivaldi judged this to be only the deſperate aſſertion of a man, who believed his laſt chance of eſcaping the rigour of the law to reſt with him; and, at the mention of Ellena, forgetting every precaution, he loudly demanded to know her ſituation. Schedoni, throwing upon him an horrible ſmile of triumph and deriſion, was paſſing forward without replying, but Vivaldi, unable to ſupport this ſtate of uncertainty, aſked permiſſion of the tribunal to converſe, for a few moments, with the priſoner; a requeſt which was granted with extreme reluctance, and only on condition that the converſation ſhould be public.

To Vivaldi's queſtions, as to the ſituation of Ellena, Schedoni only replied, that ſhe was his daughter, and the ſolemnity, which accompanied theſe repeated aſſertions, though it failed to convince Vivaldi of this truth, occaſioned him agonizing doubt and apprehenſion: but when the Confeſſor, perceiving the policy of diſcloſing her place of reſidence to Vivaldi, ſoftened from his deſire of vengeance to ſecure the intereſt of his family,

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and named the *Santa della Piéta* as her preſent aſylum, the joy of ſuch intelligence overcame, for a time, every other conſideration.

To this dialogue, however, the officials put a ſpeedy concluſion; Schedoni was led back to his cell, and Vivaldi was ſoon after ordered to his former cloſe confinement.

But Paulo became again outrageous, when he was about to be ſeparated from his maſter, till the latter, having petitioned the tribunal, that his ſervant might accompany him to his priſon, and received an abſolute refuſal, endeavoured to calm the violence of his deſpair. He fell at his maſter's feet, and ſhed tears, but he uttered no further complaints. When he roſe, he turned his eyes in ſilence upon Vivaldi, and they ſeemed to ſay, "Dear maſter! I ſhall never ſee you more!" and with this ſad expreſſion, he continued to gaze on him till he had left the hall.

Vivaldi, notwithſtanding the various ſubjects of his diſtreſs, could not bear to meet the piteous looks of this poor man, and he withdrew his eyes; yet, at every other ſtep he took, they conſtantly returned to his faithful ſervant, till the doors folded him from ſight.

When he had quitted the hall, Vivaldi pleaded, however hopeleſsly, to the officials, in favour of Paulo, entreating that they would ſpeak to the perſons, who kept guard over him, and prevail with them to ſhew him every allowable indulgence.

"No indulgence can be allowed him," replied one of the men, "except bread and water, and the liberty of walking in his cell."

"No *other!*" ſaid Vivaldi.

"None," repeated the official. "This prisoner has been near getting one of his guards into a scrape already, for, somehow or other, he so talked him over, and won upon him, (for he is but a young one here) that the man let him have a light, and a pen and ink; but, luckily, it was found out, before any harm was done."

"And what became of this honest fellow?" inquired Vivaldi.

"Honest! he was none so honest, either, Signor, if he could not mind his duty."

"Was he punished, then?"

"No, Signor," replied the man, pausing, and looking back upon the long avenue they were passing, to inquire whether he was observed to hold this conversation with a prisoner: "no, Signor, he was a younker, so they let him off for once, and sent him to guard a man, who was not so full of his coaxing ways."

"Paulo made him merry, perhaps?" asked Vivaldi. "What were the coaxing ways you spoke of?"

"Merry, Signor! no! he made him cry, and that was as bad."

"Indeed!" said Vivaldi. "The man must have been here, then, a very short time."

"Not more than a month, or so, Signor."

"But the coaxing ways you talked of," repeated Vivaldi, "what were they?——a ducat, or so?"

"A ducat!" exclaimed the man, "no! not a *paolo!*"

"Are you *sure* of that?" cried Vivaldi, shrewdly.

"Aye, sure enough, Signor. This fellow is not worth a ducat in the world!"

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"But his maſter is, friend," obſerved Vivaldi, in a very low voice, while he put ſome money into his hand.

The officer made no anſwer, but concealed the money, and nothing further was ſaid.

Vivaldi had given this as a bribe, to procure ſome kindneſs for his ſervant, not from any conſideration of himſelf, for his own critical ſituation had ceaſed at this time to be a ſubject of anxiety with him. His mind was at preſent ſtrangely agitated between emotions the moſt oppoſite in their nature, the joy which a diſcovery of Ellena's ſafety inſpired, and the horrible ſuſpicion that Schedoni's aſſurances of relationſhip occaſioned. That his Ellena was the daughter of a murderer, that the father of Ellena ſhould be brought to ignominious death, and that he himſelf, however unintentionally, ſhould have aſſiſted to this event, were conſiderations almoſt too horrible to be ſuſtained! Vivaldi ſought refuge from them in various conjectures as to the motive, which might have induced Schedoni to aſſert a falſhood in this inſtance; but that of revenge alone appeared plauſible; and even this ſurmiſe was weakened, when he conſidered that the Confeſſor had aſſured him of Ellena's ſafety, an aſſurance which, as Vivaldi did not detect the ſelfiſh policy connected with it, he believed Schedoni would not have given, had his general intent towards him been malicious. But it was poſſible, that this very information, on which all his comfort repoſed, might be falſe, and had been given only for the purpoſe of inflicting the anguiſh a diſcovery of the truth muſt lead to! With an anxiety ſo intenſe, as almoſt to overcome his faculty of judging, he examined every minute probability relative to this point, and concluded with believing that Schedo-

ni had, in this laſt inſtance, at leaſt, ſpoken honeſtly.

Whether he had done ſo in his firſt aſſertion was a queſtion, which had raiſed in Vivaldi's mind a tempeſt of conjecture and of horror; for, while the ſubject of it was too aſtoniſhing to be fully believed, it was, alſo, too dreadful, not to be apprehended even as a poſſibility.

CHAP. XIV.

O holy nun! why bend the mournful head?
Why fall thoſe tears from lids uplift in pray'r?
Why o'er thy pale cheek ſteals the feeble bluſh,
Then fades, and leaves it wan as the lily
On which a moon-beam falls?

WHILE theſe events were paſſing in the priſons of the Inquiſition at Rome, Ellena, in the ſanctuary of *Our Lady of Pity*, remained ignorant of Schedoni's arreſt, and of Vivaldi's ſituation. She underſtood that the Confeſſor was preparing to acknowledge her for his daughter, and believed that ſhe comprehended alſo the motive for his abſence; but, though he had forbidden her to expect a viſit from him till his arrangement ſhould be completed, he had promiſed to write in the mean time, and inform her of all the preſent circumſtances of Vivaldi; his unexpected ſilence had excited, therefore, apprehenſions as various, though

though not ſo terrible, as thoſe which Vivaldi had ſuffered for her; nor did the ſilence of Vivaldi himſelf appear leſs extraordinary.

"His confinement muſt be ſevere indeed," ſaid the afflicted Ellena, "ſince he cannot relieve my anxiety by a ſingle line of intelligence. Or, perhaps, haraſſed by unceaſing oppoſition, he has ſubmitted to the command of his family, and has conſented to forget me. Ah! why did I leave the opportunity for that command to his family; why did I not enforce it myſelf!"

Yet, while ſhe uttered this ſelf-reproach, the tears ſhe ſhed contradicted the pride which had ſuggeſted it; and a conviction lurking in her heart that Vivaldi could not ſo reſign her, ſoon diſſipated thoſe tears. But other conjectures recalled them; it was poſſible that he was ill—that he was dead!

In ſuch vague and gloomy ſurmiſe her days paſſed away; employment could no longer withdraw her from herſelf, nor muſic, even for a moment, charm away the ſenſe of ſorrow; yet ſhe regularly partook of the various occupations of the nuns; and was ſo far from permitting herſelf to indulge in any uſeleſs expreſſion of anxiety, that ſhe had never once diſcloſed the ſacred ſubject of it; ſo that, though ſhe could not aſſume an air of cheerfulneſs, ſhe never appeared otherwiſe than tranquil. Her moſt ſoothing, yet perhaps moſt melancholy hour, was when about ſun-ſet ſhe could withdraw unnoticed, to the terrace among the rocks, that overlooked the convent, and formed a part of its domain. There, alone and relieved from all the ceremonial reſtraints of the ſociety, her very thoughts ſeemed more at liberty. As, from beneath the light foliage of the accacias, or the

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more majeſtic ſhade of the plane-trees that waved their branches over the many-coloured cliffs of this terrace, Ellena looked down upon the magnificent ſcenery of the bay, it brought back to memory, in ſad yet pleaſing detail, the many happy days ſhe had paſſed on thoſe blue waters, or on the ſhores, in the ſociety of Vivaldi and her departed relative Bianchi; and every point of the proſpect marked by ſuch remembrance, which the veiling diſtance ſtole, was reſcued by imagination, and pictured by affection in tints more animated than thoſe of brighteſt nature.

One evening Ellena had lingered on the terrace later than uſual. She had watched the rays retiring from the higheſt points of the horizon, and the fading imagery of the lower ſcene, till, the ſun having ſunk into the waves, all colouring was withdrawn, except an empurpling and repoſing hue, which overſpread the waters and the heavens, and blended in ſoft confuſion every feature of the landſcape. The roofs and ſlender ſpires of the Santa della Pieta, with a ſingle tower of the church riſing loftily over every other part of the buildings that compoſed the convent, were fading faſt from the eye; but the ſolemn tint that inveſted them accorded ſo well with their ſtyle, that Ellena was unwilling to relinquiſh this intereſting object. Suddenly ſhe perceived through the dubious light an unuſual number of moving figures in the court of the great cloiſter, and liſtening, ſhe fancied ſhe could diſtinguiſh the murmuring of many voices. The white drapery of the nuns rendered them conſpicuous as they moved, but it was impoſſible to aſcertain who were the individuals engaged in this buſtle. Preſently the aſſemblage diſperſed; and

and Ellena, curious to underſtand the occaſion of what ſhe had obſerved, prepared to deſcend to the convent.

She had left the terrace, and was about to enter a long avenue of cheſnuts that extended to a part of the convent, communicating immediately with the great court, when ſhe heard approaching ſteps, and, on turning into the walk, perceived ſeveral perſons advancing in the ſhady diſtance. Among the voices, as they drew nearer, ſhe diſtinguiſhed one whoſe intereſting tone engaged all her attention, and began alſo to awaken memory. She liſtened, wondered, doubted, hoped and feared! It ſpoke again! Ellena thought ſhe could not be deceived in thoſe tender accents, ſo full of intelligence, ſo expreſſive of ſenſibility and refinement. She proceeded with quicker ſteps, yet faltered as ſhe drew near the group, and paused to diſcern whether among them was any figure that might accord with the voice and juſtify her hopes.

The voice ſpoke again; it pronounced her name; pronounced it with the tremblings of tenderneſs and impatience, and Ellena ſcarcely dared to truſt her ſenſes, when ſhe beheld Olivia, the nun of San Stefano, in the cloiſters of the Della Pieta!

Ellena could find no words to expreſs her joy and ſurpriſe on beholding her preſerver in ſafety, and in theſe quiet groves; but Olivia repaid all the affectionate careſſes of her young friend, and, while ſhe promiſed to explain the circumſtance that had led to her preſent appearance here, ſhe, in her turn, made numerous inquiries relative to Ellena's adventures after ſhe had quitted San Stefano. They were now, however, ſurrounded

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by too many auditors to allow of unreſerved converſation; Ellena, therefore, led the nun to her apartment, and Olivia then explained her reaſons for having left the convent of San Stefano, which were indeed ſufficient to juſtify, even with the moſt rigid devotee, her conduct as to the change. This unfortunate recluſe, it appeared, perſecuted by the ſuſpicions of the abbeſs, who underſtood that ſhe had aſſiſted in the liberation of Ellena, had petitioned the biſhop of her dioceſe for leave to remove to the Santa della Pieta. The abbeſs had not proof to proceed formally againſt her, as an accomplice in the eſcape of a novice, for though Jeronimo could have ſupplied the requiſite evidence, he was too deeply implicated in this adventure to do ſo without betraying his own conduct. From his having withheld ſuch proof, it appears, however, that accident, rather than deſign, had occaſioned his failure on the evening of Ellena's departure from the monaſtery. But, though the abbeſs had not teſtimony enough for legal puniſhment, ſhe was acquainted with circumſtances ſufficient to juſtify ſuſpicion, and had both the inclination and the power to render Olivia very miſerable.

In her choice of the Santa della Pieta, the nun was influenced by many conſiderations, ſome of which were the conſequence of converſations ſhe had held with Ellena reſpecting the ſtate of that ſociety. Her deſign ſhe had been unable to diſcloſe to her friend, leſt, by a diſcovery of ſuch correſpondence, the abbeſs of San Stefano ſhould obtain grounds on which to proceed againſt her. Even in her appeal to the biſhop the utmoſt caution and ſecrecy had been neceſſary, till the order for her removal, procured not without conſiderable delay and difficulty, arrived, and when it came,

came, the jealous anger of the ſuperior rendered an immediate departure neceſſary.

Olivia, during many years, had been unhappy in her local circumſtances, but it is probable ſhe would have concluded her days within the walls of San Stefano, had not the aggravated oppreſſion of the abbeſs arouſed her courage and activity, and diſſipated the deſpondency, with which ſevere misfortune had obſcured her views.

Ellena was particular in her inquiries whether any perſon of the monaſtery had ſuffered for the aſſiſtance they had given her; but learned, that not one, except Olivia, had been ſuſpected of befriending her; and then underſtood, that the venerable friar, who had dared to unfaſten the gate which reſtored her with Vivaldi to liberty, had not been involved by his kindneſs.

" It is an embarraſſing and rather an unuſual circumſtance," concluded Olivia, " to change one's convent; but you perceive the ſtrong reaſons which determined me upon a removal. I was, however, perhaps, the more impatient of ſevere treatment, ſince you, my ſiſter, had deſcribed to me the ſociety of *Our Lady of Pity*, and ſince I believed it poſſible that you might form a part of it. When, on my arrival here, I learned that my wiſhes had not deceived me on this point, I was impatient to ſee you once more, and as ſoon as the ceremonies attending an introduction to the ſuperior were over, I requeſted to be conducted to you, and was in ſearch of you when we met in the avenue. It is unneceſſary for me to inſiſt upon the ſatisfaction, which this meeting gives me; but you may not, perhaps, underſtand how much the manners of our lady abbeſs, and of the ſiſterhood in general, as far as a firſt interview will allow me to judge of them,

them, have re-animated me. The gloom, which has long hung over my proſpects, ſeems now to open, and a diſtant gleam promiſes to light up the evening of my ſtormy day."

Olivia paused and appeared to recollect herſelf; this was the firſt time ſhe had made ſo direct a reference to her own misfortunes; and, while Ellena ſilently remarked it, and obſerved the dejection, which was already ſtealing upon the expreſſive countenance of the nun, ſhe wiſhed, yet feared to lead her back towards the ſubject of them.

Endeavouring to diſmiſs ſome painful remembrance, and aſſuming a ſmile of languid gaiety, Olivia ſaid, "Now that I have related the hiſtory of my removal, and ſufficiently indulged my egotiſm, will you let me hear what adventures have befallen you, my young friend, ſince the melancholy adieu you gave me in the gardens of San Stefano."

This was a taſk, to which Ellena's ſpirits, though revived by the preſence of Olivia, were ſtill unequal. Over the ſcenes of her paſt diſtreſs Time had not yet drawn his ſhadowing veil; the colours were all too freſh and gariſh for the meek dejection of her eye, and the ſubject was too intimately connected with that of her preſent anxiety, to be reviewed without very painful feelings. She therefore requeſted Olivia to ſpare her from a detail of particulars, which ſhe could not recollect but with extreme reluctance; and, ſcrupulouſly obſerving the injunction of Schedoni, ſhe merely mentioned her ſeparation from Vivaldi upon the banks of the Celano, and that a variety of diſtreſſing circumſtances had intervened before ſhe could regain the ſanctuary of the della Pieta.

Olivia underſtood too well the kind of feelings, from which Ellena was deſirous of eſcaping, willingly to ſubject her to a renewal of them; and felt too much generous compaſſion for her ſufferings not to endeavour to ſoothe the ſenſe of them by an exertion of thoſe delicate and nameleſs arts which, while they mock detection, faſcinate the weary ſpirit as by a charm of magic!

The friends continued in converſation, till a chime from a chapel of the convent ſummoned them to the laſt veſpers; and, when the ſervice had concluded, they ſeparated for the night.

With the ſociety of the Santa della Pieta, Olivia had thus found an aſylum ſuch as till lately ſhe had never dared to hope for; but, though ſhe frequently expreſſed her ſenſe of this bleſſing, it was ſeldom without tears; and Ellena obſerved, with ſome ſurpriſe and more diſappointment, within a very few days after her arrival, a cloud of melancholy ſpreading again over her mind.

But a nearer intereſt ſoon withdrew Ellena's attention from Olivia to fix it upon Vivaldi; and, when ſhe ſaw her infirm old ſervant, Beatrice, enter a chamber of the convent, ſhe anticipated that the knowledge of ſome extraordinary, and probably unhappy, event had brought her. She knew too well the circumſpection of Schedoni to believe that Beatrice came commiſſioned from him; and as the uncertain ſituation of Vivaldi was ſo conſtantly the ſubject of her anxiety, ſhe immediately concluded that her ſervant came to announce ſome evil relative to him.—His indiſpoſition, perhaps his actual confinement in the Inquiſition, which lately ſhe had ſometimes been inclined to think might not have been a mere menace to Vivaldi, though it had proved to be no more to herſelf;——or poſſibly ſhe came to tell of his death——

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his death in thoſe priſons! This laſt was a poſſibility that almoſt incapacitated her for inquiring what was the errand of Beatrice.

The old ſervant, trembling and wan, either from the fatigue of her walk, or from a conſciouſneſs of diſaſtrous intelligence, ſeated herſelf without ſpeaking, and ſome moments elapſed before ſhe could be prevailed with to anſwer the repeated inquiries of Ellena.

"O Signora!" ſaid ſhe, at length, "you do not know what it is to walk up hill ſuch a long way, at my age! Well! heaven protect you, I hope you never will!"

"I perceive you bring ill news," ſaid Ellena; "I am prepared for it, and you need not fear to tell me all you know."

"Holy San Marco!" exclaimed Beatrice, "if death be ill news, you have gueſſed right, Signora, for I do bring news of that, it is certain. How came you, Lady, to know my errand? They have been beforehand with me, I ſee, though I have not walked ſo faſt up hill this many a day, as I have now, to tell you what has happened."

She ſtopped on obſerving the changing countenance of Ellena, who tremulouſly called upon her to explain what had happened — who was dead; and entreated her to relate the particulars as ſpeedily as poſſible.

"You ſaid you was prepared, Signora," ſaid Beatrice, "but your looks tell another tale."——

"What is the event you would diſcloſe?" ſaid Ellena, almoſt breathleſs. "When did it happen?—be brief."

"I cannot tell exactly when it happened, Signora, but it was an own ſervant of the Marcheſe's that I had it from."

"The Marcheſe's?" interrupted Ellena in a faltering voice.

"Aye, Lady; you will ſay that is pretty good authority."

"Death! and in the Marcheſe's family!" exclaimed Ellena.

"Yes, Signora, I had it from his own ſervant. He was paſſing by the garden-gate juſt as I happened to be ſpeaking to the maccaroni-man.—But you are ill, Lady!"——

"I am very well, if you will but proceed," replied Ellena, faintly, while her eyes were fixed upon Beatrice, as if they only had power to enforce her meaning.

"'Well, dame,' he ſays to me, 'I have not ſeen you of a long time.' 'No,' ſays I, "that is a great grievance truly! for old women now-a-days are not much thought of; out of ſight out of mind with them, now-a-days!"——

"I beſeech you to the purpoſe," interrupted Ellena. "Whoſe death did he announce?" She had not courage to pronounce Vivaldi's name.

"You ſhall hear, Signora. I ſaw he looked in a ſort of a buſtle, ſo I aſked him how all did at the Palazzo: ſo he anſwers, 'Bad enough, Signora Beatrice, have not you heard?' 'Heard,' ſays I; 'what ſhould I have heard?' 'Why,' ſays he, 'of what has juſt happened in our family."

"O heavens!" exclaimed Ellena, "he is dead! Vivaldi is dead!"

"You ſhall hear, Signora," continued Beatrice.

"Be brief!" ſaid Ellena, "anſwer me ſimply yes or no."

"I cannot,

"I cannot, till I come to the right place, Signora; if you will but have a little patience, you shall hear all. But if you fluſter me ſo, you will put me quite out."

"Grant me patience!" ſaid Ellena, endeavouring to calm her ſpirits.

"With that, Signora, I aſked him to walk in in and reſt himſelf, and tell me all about it. He anſwered, he was in a great hurry, and could not ſtay a moment, and a great deal of that ſort; but I, knowing that whatever happened in that family, Signora, was ſomething to you, would not let him go off ſo eaſily; and ſo, when I aſked him to refreſh himſelf with a glaſs of lemon-ice, he forgot all his buſineſs in a minute, and we had a long chat."

And Beatrice might now have continued her circumlocution, perhaps as long as ſhe had pleaſed, for Ellena had loſt all power to urge inquiry, and was ſcarcely ſenſible of what was ſaid. She neither ſpoke, nor ſhed a tear; the one image that poſſeſſed her fancy, the image of Vivaldi dead ſeemed to hold all her faculties, as by a ſpell.

"So when I aſked him," added Beatrice, "again what had happened, he was ready enough to tell all about it. 'It is near a month ago,' ſaid he, 'ſince ſhe was firſt taken; the Marcheſa had been"——

"The Marcheſa!" repeated Ellena, with whom that one word had diſſolved the ſpell of terror—"the Marcheſa!"

"Yes Signora, to be ſure. Who elſe did I ſay it was!"

"Go on, Beatrice; the Marcheſa?"—

"What makes you look ſo glad all of a ſudden, Signora? I thought juſt now you was very ſorry about

about it. What! I warrant you was thinking about my young lord, Vivaldi."

"Proceed," ſaid Ellena.

"Well!" added Beatrice, 'It was about a month ago that the Marcheſa was firſt taken,' continued the varlet. 'She had ſeemed poorly a long time, but it was from a *converſazione* at the di Voglio palazzo, that ſhe came home ſo ill. It is ſuppoſed ſhe had been long in a bad ſtate of health, but nobody thought her ſo near her end, till the doctors were called together; and then matters looked very bad indeed. They found out that ſhe had been dying, or as good, for many years, though nobody elſe had ſuſpected it, and the Marcheſa's own phyſician was blamed for not finding it out before. But he,' added the rogue, 'had a regard for my lady. He was very obſtinate too, for he kept ſaying almoſt to the laſt, there was no danger, when every body elſe ſaw how it was going. The other doctors ſoon made their words good, and my lady died.

"And her ſon"—ſaid Ellena, "was he with the Marcheſa when ſhe expired?"

"What, Signor Vivaldi, lady? No, the Signor was not there."

"That is very extraordinary!" obſerved Ellena with emotion. "Did the ſervant mention him?"

"Yes, Signora; he ſaid what a ſad thing it was that he ſhould be out of the way at that time, and nobody know where!"

"Are his family then ignorant where he is?" aſked Ellena, with increaſed emotion.

"To be ſure they are, lady, and have been for theſe many weeks. They have heard nothing at all of the Signor, or one Paulo Mendrico, his ſervant, though the Marcheſa's people have been

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riding poſt after them from one end of the kingdom to the other all the time!"

Shocked with the conviction of a circumſtance, which, till lately ſhe ſcarcely believed was poſſible, the impriſonment of Vivaldi in the Inquiſition, Ellena loſt for a while all power of further inquiry; but Beatrice proceeded.

"The Lady Marcheſa ſeemed to lay ſomething much to heart, as the man told me, and often inquired for Signor Vincentio."

"The Marcheſa you are ſure then was ignorant where he was?" ſaid Ellena, with new aſtoniſhment and perplexity as to the perſon who, after betraying him into the Inquiſition, could yet have ſuffered her, though arreſted at the ſame time, to eſcape.

"Yes, Signora, for ſhe wanted ſadly to ſee him. And when ſhe was dying, ſhe ſent for her Confeſſor, one father Schedoni, I think they call him, and"—

"What of him?" ſaid Ellena incautiouſly.

"Nothing, Signora, for he could not be found."

"Not be found!" repeated Ellena.

"No, Signora, not juſt then; he was Confeſſor, I warrant, to other people beſide the Marcheſa, and I dare ſay they had ſins enough to confeſs, ſo he could not get away in a hurry."

Ellena recollected herſelf ſufficiently to aſk no further of Schedoni; and, when ſhe conſidered the probable cauſe of Vivaldi's arreſt, ſhe was again conſoled by a belief that he had not fallen into the power of real officials, ſince the comrades of the men who had arreſted him, had proved themſelves otherwiſe; and ſhe thought it highly probable, that, while undiſcovered by his family, he

he had been, and was ſtill engaged in ſearching for the place of her confinement.

"But I was ſaying," proceeded Beatrice, "what a buſtle there was when my lady, the Marcheſa was dying. As this father Schedoni was not to be found, another Confeſſor was ſent for, and ſhut up with her for a long while indeed! And then my Lord Marcheſe was called in, and there ſeemed to be a deal going forward, for my Lord was heard every now and then by the attendants in the anti-chamber, talking loud, and ſometimes my Lady Marcheſa's voice was heard too, though ſhe was ſo ill! At laſt all was ſilent, and after ſome time my Lord came out of the room, and he ſeemed very much fluſtered, they ſay, that is, very angry and yet very ſorrowful. But the Confeſſor remained with my Lady for a long while after; and, when he departed, my Lady appeared more unhappy than ever. She lived all that night and part of the next day, and ſomething ſeemed to lie very heavy at her heart, for ſhe ſometimes wept, but oftener groaned, and would look ſo, that it was piteous to ſee her. She frequently aſked for the Marcheſe, and when he came, the attendants were ſent away, and they held long conferences by themſelves. The Confeſſor alſo was ſent for again, juſt at the laſt, and they were all ſhut up together. After this, my Lady appeared more eaſy in her mind, and not long after ſhe died.

Ellena, who had attended cloſely to this little narrative, was prevented for the preſent from aſking the few queſtions which it had ſuggeſted, by the entrance of Olivia, who, on perceiving a ſtranger, was retiring, but Ellena, not conſidering theſe inquiries as important, prevailed with

with the nun to take a chair at the embroidery frame ſhe had lately quitted.

After converſing for a few moments with Olivia, ſhe returned to a conſideration of her own intereſts. The abſence of Schedoni ſtill appeared to her as ſomething more than accidental; and, though ſhe could not urge any inquiry with Beatrice, concerning the monk of the Spirito Santo, ſhe ventured to aſk whether ſhe had lately ſeen the ſtranger, who had reſtored her to Altieri, for Beatrice knew him only in the character of Ellena's deliverer.

"No, Signora," replied Beatrice rather ſharply, "I have never ſeen his face ſince he attended you to the villa, though for that matter, I did not ſee much of it there; and then how he contrived to let himſelf out of the houſe that night without my ſeeing him, I cannot divine, though I have thought of it often enough ſince. I am ſure he need not to have been aſhamed to have ſhewn his face to me, for I ſhould only have bleſſed him for bringing you ſafe home again!"

Ellena was ſomewhat ſurprized to find that Beatrice had noticed a circumſtance apparently ſo trivial, and replied, that ſhe had herſelf opened the door for her protector.

While Beatrice ſpoke, Olivia raiſing her eyes from the embroidery, had fixed them upon the old ſervant, who reſpectfully withdrew her's; but, when the nun was again engaged on her work, ſhe reſumed her obſervation. Ellena fancied ſhe perceived ſomething extraordinary in this mutual examination, although the curioſity of ſtrangers towards each other might have accounted for it.

Beatrice then received directions from Ellena as to ſome drawings, which ſhe wiſhed to have

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ſent to the convent, and when the ſervant ſpoke in reply, Olivia again raiſed her eyes, and fixed them on her face with intenſe curioſity.

" I certainly ought to know that voice," ſaid the nun, with great emotion, " though I dare not judge from your features. Is it,—can it be poſſible!—is it Beatrice Olca, to whom I ſpeak? So many years have paſſed"——

Beatrice with equal ſurprize anſwered, " It is, Signora; you are right in my name. But, lady, who are right in my name. But, lady, who are you that know me?"

While ſhe earneſtly regarded Olivia, there was an expreſſion of diſmay in her look, which increaſed Ellena's perplexity. The nun's complexion varied every inſtant, and her words failed when ſhe attempted to ſpeak. Beatrice meanwhile exclaimed, " My eyes deceive me! yet there is a ſtrange likeneſs. Santa della Pieta! how it has fluttered me! my heart beats ſtill—you are ſo like her, lady, yet you are very different too."

Olivia, whoſe regards were now entirely fixed upon Ellena, ſaid in a voice that was ſcarcely articulate, while her whole frame ſeemed ſinking beneath ſome irreſiſtible feeling, "Tell me, Beatrice, I conjure you, quickly ſay, who is this?"——She pointed to Ellena, and the ſentence died on her lips.

Beatrice, wholly occupied by intereſts of her own, gave no reply, but exclaimed, " It is in truth the Lady Olivia! It is herſelf! In the name of all that is ſacred, how came you here? O! how glad you muſt have been to find one another out!" She looked, ſtill gaſping with aſtoniſhment at Olivia, while Ellena, unheard, repeatedly enquired the meaning of her words,

and in the next moment found herſelf preſſed to the boſom of the nun, who ſeemed better to have underſtood them, and who weeping, trembling, and almoſt fainting, held her there in ſilence.

Ellena, after ſome moments had thus paſſed, requeſted an explanation of what ſhe witneſſed, and Beatrice at the ſame time demanded the cauſe of all this emotion. "For can it be that you did not know one another?" ſhe added.

"What new diſcovery is this?" ſaid Ellena, fearfully to the nun. "It is but lately that I have found my father! O tell me by what tender name I am to call you?"

"Your father!" exclaimed Olivia.

"Your father, lady!" echoed Beatrice.

Ellena, betrayed by ſtrong emotion into this premature mention of Schedoni, was embarraſſed and remained ſilent.

"No, my child!" ſaid Olivia, ſoftening from amazement into tones of ineffable ſorrow, while ſhe again preſſed Ellena to her heart—"No! thy father is in the grave!"

Ellena no longer returned her careſſes; ſurprize and doubt ſuſpended every tender emotion; ſhe gazed upon Olivia with an intenſeneſs that partook of wildneſs. At length ſhe ſaid ſlowly —"It is my mother, then, whom I ſee! When will theſe diſcoveries end!"

"It is your mother!" replied Olivia ſolemnly, "a mother's bleſſing reſts with you!"

The nun endeavoured to ſoothe the agitated ſpirits of Ellena, though ſhe was herſelf nearly overwhelmed by the various and acute feelings this diſcloſure occaſioned. For a conſiderable time they were unable to ſpeak but

but in ſhort ſentences of affectionate exclamation, but joy was evidently a more predominant feeling with the parent than with the child. When, however, Ellena could weep, ſhe became more tranquil, and by degrees was ſenſible of a degree of happineſs, ſuch as ſhe had perhaps never experienced.

Meanwhile Beatrice ſeemed loſt in amazement mingled with fear. She expreſſed no pleaſure, notwithſtanding the joy ſhe witneſſed, but was uniformly grave and obſervant.

Olivia, when ſhe recovered ſome degree of compoſure, inquired for her ſiſter Bianchi. The ſilence and ſudden dejection of Ellena indicated the truth. On this mention of her late miſtreſs, Beatrice recovered the uſe of ſpeech.

"Alas! lady," ſaid the old ſervant, "ſhe is now where I believed you were! and I ſhould as ſoon have expected to ſee my dear miſtreſs here as yourſelf!"

Olivia, though affected by this intelligence, did not feel it with the acuteneſs ſhe would have done probably at any other moment. After ſhe had indulged her tears, ſhe added, that from the unuſual ſilence of Bianchi, ſhe had ſuſpected the truth, and particularly ſince not any anſwer had been returned to the letter ſhe had ſent to Altieri upon her arrival at the Santa della Pieta.

"Alas!" ſaid Beatrice, "I wonder much my lady abbeſs failed to tell you the ſad news, for ſhe knew it too well!——My dear miſtreſs is buried in the church here! as for the letter, I have brought it with me for Signora Ellena to open."

"The lady abbeſs is not informed of our relationſhip," replied Olivia, "and I have particular reaſons for wiſhing that at preſent ſhe

ſhould remain ignorant of it. Even you, my Ellena, muſt appear only as my friend, till ſome enquiries have been made, which are eſſential to my peace."

Olivia required an explanation of Ellena's late extraordinary aſſertion reſpecting her father, but this was a requeſt made with emotions very different from thoſe which hope or joy inſpire. Ellena believing that the ſame circumſtances which had deceived herſelf during ſo many years, as to his death, had alſo miſled Olivia, was not ſurpriſed at the incredulity her mother had ſhewn, but ſhe was conſiderably embarraſſed how to anſwer her enquiries. It was now too late to obſerve the promiſe of ſecrecy extorted from her by Schedoni: the firſt moments of ſurprize had betrayed her; yet, while ſhe trembled further to tranſgreſs his injunction, ſhe perceived that a full explanation was now unavoidable. And, ſince Ellena conſidered, that as Schedoni could not have foreſeen her preſent peculiar ſituation, his command had no reference to her mother, her ſcruples on this head diſappeared. When, therefore, Beatrice had withdrawn, Ellena repeated her aſſertion, that her father ſtill lived; which, though it encreaſed the amazement of Olivia, did not vanquiſh her incredulity. Olivia's tears flowed faſt, while in contradiction to this aſſurance, ſhe mentioned the year in which the Count di Bruno died, with ſome circumſtances relative to his death; which, however, as Ellena underſtood that her mother had not witneſſed it, ſhe ſtill believed had not happened. To confirm her late aſſertion, Ellena then related a few particulars of her ſecond interview with Schedoni, and as ſome confirmation that he

he lived, offered to produce the portrait, which he had claimed as his own. Olivia, in great agitation, requeſted to ſee the miniature, and Ellena left the apartment in ſearch of it.

Every moment of her abſence was to Olivia's expectation lengthened to an hour; ſhe paced the room; liſtened for a footſtep; endeavoured to tranquillize her ſpirits, and ſtill Ellena did not return. Some ſtrange myſtery ſeemed to lurk in the narrative ſhe had juſt heard, which ſhe wiſhed, yet dreaded to develope; and when, at length, Ellena appeared with the miniature, ſhe took it in trembling eagerneſs, and having gazed upon it for an inſtant, her complexion faded and ſhe fainted.

Ellena had now no doubt reſpecting the truth of Schedoni's declaration, and blamed herſelf for not having more gradually prepared her mother for the knowledge of a circumſtance, which ſhe believed had overwhelmed her with joy. The uſual applications, however, ſoon reſtored Olivia, who, when ſhe was again alone with her daughter, deſired to behold once more the portrait. Ellena attributing the ſtrong emotion with which ſhe ſtill regarded it, to ſurprize, and fear leſt ſhe was admitting a fallacious hope, endeavoured to comfort her by renewed aſſurances, that not only the Count di Bruno yet exiſted, but that he lived at this very time in Naples, and further, that he would probably be in her preſence within the hour. "When I quitted the room for the miniature," added Ellena, "I diſpatched a perſon with a note, requeſting to ſee my father immediately, being impatient to realize the joy, which ſuch a meeting between my long loſt parents muſt occaſion."

In this inſtance Ellena had certainly ſuffered her generous ſympathy to overcome her diſcretion, for, though the contents of the note to Schedoni could not poſitively have betrayed him, had he even been in Naples at this time, her ſending it to the Spirito Santo, inſtead of the place which he had appointed for his letters, might have led to a premature inquiry reſpecting herſelf.

While Ellena had acquainted Olivia that Schedoni would probably be with them ſoon, ſhe watched eagerly for the joyful ſurprize ſhe expected would appear on her countenance; how ſevere then was her diſappointment when only terror and diſmay were expreſſed there! and, when, in the next moment, her mother uttered exclamations of diſtreſs and even of deſpair!

"If he ſees me," ſaid Olivia, "I am irrecoverably loſt! O! unhappy Ellena! your precipitancy has deſtroyed me. The original of this portrait is not the Count di Bruno, *my* dear lord, nor your parent, but his brother, the cruel huſband"——

Olivia left the ſentence unfiniſhed, as if ſhe was betraying more than was at preſent diſcreet; but Ellena, whom aſtoniſhment had kept ſilent, now entreated that ſhe would explain her words, and the cauſe of her diſtreſs.

"I know not," ſaid Olivia, "by what means that portrait has been conveyed to you; but it is the reſemblance of the Count Ferando di Bruno, the brother of my lord, and my"—— ſecond huſband ſhe ſhould have ſaid, but her lips refuſed to honour him with the title.

She pauſed and was much affected, but preſently added—

"I cannot

"I cannot at preſent explain the ſubject more fully, for it is to me a very diſtreſſing one. Let me rather conſider the means of avoiding an interview with di Bruno, and even of concealing, if poſſible, that I exiſt."

Olivia was, however, ſoothed when ſhe underſtood that Ellena had not named her in the note, but had merely deſired to ſee the Confeſſor upon a very particular occaſion.

While they were conſulting upon the excuſe it would be neceſſary to form for this imprudent ſummons, the meſſenger returned with a note unopened, and with information that father Schedoni was abroad on a pilgrimage, which was the explanation the brothers of the Spirito Santo choſe to give of his abſence; judging it prudent, for the honour of their convent, to conceal his real ſituation.

Olivia, thus releaſed from her fears, conſented to explain ſome points of the ſubject ſo intereſting to Ellena; but it was not till ſeveral days after this diſcovery, that ſhe could ſufficiently command her ſpirits to relate the whole of her narrative. The firſt part of it agreed perfectly with the account delivered in the confeſſion to the penitentiary Anſaldo; that which follows was known only to herſelf, her ſiſter Bianchi, a phyſician, and one faithful ſervant, who had been conſiderably entruſted with the conduct of the plan.

It may be recollected that Schedoni left his houſe immediately after the act, which was deſigned to be fatal to the Counteſs his wife, and that ſhe was carried ſenſeleſs to her chamber. The wound as appears was not mortal. But the atrocity of the intent determined her to

ſeize the opportunity thus offered by the abſence of Schedoni, and her own peculiar circumſtances, to releaſe herſelf from his tyranny without having recourſe to a court of juſtice, which would have covered with infamy the brother of her firſt huſband. She withdrew, therefore, from his houſe for ever, and with the aſſiſtance of the three perſons before-mentioned, retired to a remote part of Italy, and ſought refuge in the convent of San Stefano, while at home the report of her death was confirmed by a public funeral. Bianchi remained for ſome time after the departure of Olivia, in her own reſidence near the Villa di Bruno, having taken under her immediate care the daughter of the Counteſs and of the firſt Count di Bruno, as well as an infant daughter of the ſecond.

After ſome time had elapſed, Bianchi withdrew with her young charge, but not to the neighbourhood of San Stefano. The indulgence of a mother's tenderneſs was denied to Olivia, for Bianchi could not reſide near the convent without ſubjecting her to the hazard of a diſcovery, ſince Schedoni, though he now believed the report of her death, might be led to doubt it by the conduct of Bianchi, whoſe ſteps would probably be obſerved by him. She choſe a reſidence, therefore, at a diſtance from Olivia, though not yet at Altieri. At this period, Ellena was not two years old; the daughter of Schedoni was ſcarcely as many months, and ſhe died before the year concluded. It was this his child, for whom the Confeſſor, who had too well concealed himſelf to permit Bianchi to acquaint him with her death, had miſtaken Ellena, and to which miſtake his own

own portrait, affirmed by Ellena to be that of her father, had contributed. This miniature ſhe had found in the cabinet of Bianchi after her aunt's deceaſe, and, obſerving it inſcribed with the title of Count di Bruno, ſhe had worn it with a filial fondneſs ever ſince that period.

Bianchi, when ſhe had acquainted Ellena with the ſecret of her birth, was withheld both by prudence and humanity, from intruſting her with a knowledge that her mother lived; but this, no doubt, was the circumſtance ſhe appeared ſo anxious to diſcloſe on her death-bed, when the ſuddenneſs of her diſorder had deprived her of the power. The abruptneſs of that event had thus contributed to keep the mother and daughter unknown to each other, even when they afterwards accidentally met, to which concealment the name of Roſalba, given to Ellena from her infancy by Bianchi, for the purpoſe of protecting her from diſcovery by her uncle, had aſſiſted. Beatrice, who was not the domeſtic intruſted with the eſcape of Olivia, had believed the report of her death, and thus, though ſhe knew Ellena to be the daughter of the Counteſs di Bruno, ſhe could never have been a means of diſcovering them to each other, had it not happened that Olivia recognized this ancient ſervant of Bianchi, while Ellena was preſent.

When Bianchi came to reſide in the neighbourhood of Naples, ſhe was unſuſpicious that Schedoni, who had never been heard of ſince the night of the aſſaſſination, inhabited there; and ſhe ſo ſeldom left her houſe, that it is not ſurprizing ſhe ſhould never happen to meet him, at leaſt conſciouſly; for her veil, and the monk's cowl, might eaſily have concealed them from each other if they had met.

It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi to diſcloſe to Vivaldi the family of Ellena, before their nuptials were ſolemnized; ſince, on the evening of their laſt converſation, ſhe had declared, when her ſpirits were exhauſted by the exertion ſhe had made, that much remained for her to ſay, which weakneſs obliged her to defer till another opportunity. Her unexpected death prevented any future meeting. That ſhe had not ſooner intended to make a communication, which might have removed, in a conſiderable degree, the objection of the Vivaldi to a connection with Ellena, appears extraordinary, till other circumſtances of her family, than that of its nobility, are conſidered. Her preſent indigence, and yet more, the guilt attached to an individual of the di Bruno, it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe would operate as a full antidote to the allurement of rank, however jealous of birth the Vivaldi had proved themſelves.

Ferando di Bruno had contrived, even in the ſhort interval between the death of his brother and the ſuppoſed deceaſe of his wife, again to embarraſs his affairs, and ſoon after his flight, the income ariſing from what remained of his landed property had been ſeized upon by his creditors, whether lawfully or not, he was then in a ſituation which did not permit him to conteſt, and Ellena was thus left wholly dependant upon her aunt. The ſmall fortune of Bianchi had been diminiſhed by the aſſiſtance ſhe afforded Olivia, for whoſe admittance into the convent of San Stefano it had been neceſſary to advance a conſiderable ſum; and her original income was afterwards reduced by the purchaſe of the villa Altieri.

This

This expenditure, however, was not an imprudent one, since she preferred the comforts and independence of a pleasant home, with industry, to the indulgence of an indolence which must have confined her to an inferior residence; and was acquainted with the means of making this industry profitable without being dishonourable. She excelled in many elegant and ingenious arts, and the productions of her pencil and needle were privately disposed of to the nuns of the Santa della Pieta. When Ellena was of an age to assist her, she resigned much of the employment and the profit to her niece, whose genius having unfolded itself, the beauty of her designs and the elegance of her execution, both in drawings and embroidery, were so highly valued by the purchasers at the grate of the convent, that Bianchi committed to Ellena altogether the exercise of her art.

Olivia meanwhile had dedicated her life to devotion in the monastery of San Stefano, a choice which was willingly made while her mind was yet softened by grief for the death of her first lord, and wearied by the cruelty she had afterwards experienced. The first years of her retirement were passed in tranquillity, except when the remembrance of her child, whom she did not dare to see at the convent, awakened a parental pang. With Bianchi she, however, corresponded as regularly as opportunity would allow, and had at least the consolation of knowing, that the object most dear to her lived, till, within a short period of Ellena's arrival at the very asylum chosen by her mother, her apprehensions were in some degree excited by the unusual silence of Bianchi.

When

When Olivia had firſt ſeen Ellena in the chapel of San Stefano, ſhe was ſtruck with a ſlight reſemblance ſhe bore to the late Count di Bruno, and had frequently afterwards examined her features with a moſt painful curioſity; but, circumſtanced as ſhe was, Olivia could not reaſonably ſuſpect the ſtranger to be her daughter. Once, however, a ſenſe of this poſſibility ſo far overcame her judgment, as to prompt an inquiry for the ſirname of Ellena; but the mention of Roſalba had checked all further conjecture. What would have been the feelings of the nun, had ſhe been told when her generous compaſſion was aſſiſting a ſtranger to eſcape from oppreſſion, that ſhe was preſerving her own child! It may be worthy of obſervation, that the virtues of Olivia, exerted in a general cauſe, had thus led her unconſciouſly to the happineſs of ſaving her daughter; while the vices of Schedoni had as unconſciouſly urged him nearly to deſtroy his niece, and had always been preventing, by the means they prompted him to employ, the ſucceſs of his conſtant aim.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

"Thoſe hours, which lately ſmil'd, where are they now?
Pallid to thought and ghaſtly!"

YOUNG.

THE Marcheſa di Vivaldi, of whoſe death Beatrice had given an imperfect account, ſtruck with remorſe of the crime ſhe had meditated againſt Ellena, and with terror of the puniſhment due to it, had ſent, when on her death-bed, for a Confeſſor, to whom ſhe unburthened her conſcience, and from whom ſhe hoped to receive, in return, an alleviation of her deſpair. This Confeſſor was a man of good ſenſe and humanity; and, when he fully underſtood the ſtory of Vivaldi and Ellena di Roſalba, he declared, that her only hope of forgiveneſs, both for the crime ſhe had meditated, and the undeſerved ſufferings ſhe had occaſioned, reſted upon her willingneſs to make thoſe now happy, whom ſhe had formerly rendered miſerable. Her conſcience had already given her the ſame leſſon; and, now that ſhe was ſinking to that grave which levels all diſtinctions, and had her juſt fear of retribution no longer oppoſed by her pride, ſhe became as anxious to promote the marriage of Vivaldi with Ellena as ſhe had ever been to prevent it. She ſent, therefore, for the Marcheſe; and, having made an avowal of the arts ſhe had practiſed againſt the peace and reputation of Ellena, without, however, confeſſing

ing the full extent of her intended crimes, ſhe made it her laſt requeſt, that he would conſent to the happineſs of his ſon.

The Marcheſe, however, ſhocked as he was at this diſcovery of the duplicity and cruelty of his wife, had neither her terror of the future, or remorſe for the paſt, to overcome his objection to the rank of Ellena; and he reſiſted all her importunity, till the anguiſh of her laſt hours overcame every conſideration but that of affording her relief; he then gave a ſolemn promiſe, in the preſence of the Confeſſor, that he would no longer oppoſe the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, ſhould the former perſiſt in his attachment to her. This promiſe was ſufficient for the Marcheſa, and ſhe died with ſome degree of reſignation. It did not, however, appear probable, that the Marcheſe would ſoon be called upon to fulfil the engagements, into which he had ſo unwillingly entered, every inquiry after Vivaldi having been hitherto ineffectual.

During the progreſs of this fruitleſs ſearch for his ſon, and while the Marcheſe was almoſt lamenting him as dead, the inhabitants of the Vivaldi palace were, one night, arouſed from ſleep by a violent knocking at the great gate of the court. The noiſe was ſo loud and inceſſant, that, before the porter could obey the ſummons, the Marcheſe, whoſe apartment looked upon the court, was alarmed, and ſent an attendant from his anti-room, to inquire the occaſion of it.

Preſently a voice was heard from the firſt anti chamber, exclaiming, "I muſt ſee my Lord Marcheſe directly; he will not be angry to be waked, when he knows all about it;" and, before the Marcheſe could order that no perſon, on whatever pretence, ſhould be admitted, Paulo, haggard, ragged,

ragged, and covered with dirt, was in the chamber. His wan and affrighted countenance, his diſordered dreſs, and his very attitude, as on entering he half turned to look back upon the antirooms, like one, who, juſt eſcaped from bondage, liſtens to the fancied ſounds of purſuit, were altogether ſo ſtriking and terrific, that the Marcheſe, anticipating ſome dreadful news of Vivaldi, had ſcarcely power to inquire for him. Paulo, however, rendered queſtions unneceſſary; for, without any circumlocution, or preface, he immediately informed the Marcheſe, that the Signor, his dear maſter, was in the priſons of the Inquiſition, at Rome, if, indeed, they had not put an end to him before that time."

"Yes, my Lord," ſaid Paulo, "I am juſt got out myſelf, for they would not let me be with the Signor, ſo it was of no uſe to ſtay there any longer. Yet it was a hard matter with me to go away, and leave my dear maſter within thoſe diſmal walls; and nothing ſhould have perſuaded me to do ſo, but that I hoped, when your Lordſhip knew where the Signor was, you might be able to get him out. But there is not a minute to be loſt, my Lord, for when once a gentleman has got within the claws of thoſe inquiſitors, there is no knowing how ſoon they may take it in their heads to tear him in pieces. Shall I order horſes for Rome, my Lord? I am ready to ſet off again directly.

The ſuddenneſs of ſuch intelligence, concerning an only ſon, might have agitated ſtronger nerves than thoſe of the Marcheſe, and ſo much was he ſhocked by it, that he could not immediately determine how to proceed, or give any anſwer to Paulo's repeated queſtions. When, however,

however, he became ſufficiently recollected to make further inquiry into the ſituation of Vivaldi, he perceived the neceſſity of an immediate journey; but firſt it would be prudent to conſult with ſome friends, whoſe connections at Rome might be a means of greatly facilitating the important purpoſe, which led him thither, and this could not be done till the following morning. Yet he gave orders, that preparation ſhould be made for his ſetting out at a moment's notice; and, having liſtened to as full an account as Paulo could give of the paſt and preſent circumſtances of Vivaldi, he diſmiſſed him to repoſe for the remainder of the night.

Paulo, however, though much in want of reſt, was in too great an agitation of ſpirits either to ſeek or to find it; and the fear he had indicated, on entering the Marcheſe's apartment, proceeded from the hurry of his mind, rather than from any poſitive apprehenſion of new evil. For his liberty he was indebted to the young centinel, who had on a former occaſion been removed from the door of his priſon, but who, by means of the guard, to whom Vivaldi had given money, as he returned one night from the tribunal, had ſince been able to communicate with him. This man, of a nature too humane for his ſituation, was become wretched in it, and he determined to eſcape from his office before the expiration of the time, for which he had been engaged. He thought that to be a guard over priſoners was nearly as miſerable as being a priſoner himſelf. "I ſee no difference between them," ſaid he, "except that the priſoner watches on one ſide of the door, and the centinel on the other."

With the reſolution to releaſe himſelf, he conferred with Paulo, whoſe good nature and feeling heart

heart, among ſo many people of a contrary character, had won his confidence and affection, and he laid his plan of eſcape ſo well, that it was on the point of ſucceeding, when Paulo's obſtinacy in attempting an impoſſibility had nearly counteracted the whole. It went to his heart, he ſaid, to leave his maſter in priſon, while he himſelf was to march off in ſafety, and he would run the riſk of his neck, rather than have ſuch a deed upon his head. He propoſed, therefore, as Vivaldi's guards were of too ferocious a nature to be tampered with, to ſcale a wall of the court into which a grate of Vivaldi's dungeon looked. But had this lofty wall been practicable, the grate was not; and the attempt had nearly coſt Paulo not only his liberty, but his life.

When, at length, he had made his way through the perilous avenues of the priſon, and was fairly beyond the walls, he could hardly be prevailed upon by his companion to leave them. For near an hour, he wandered under their ſhade, weeping and exclaiming, and calling upon his dear maſter, at the evident hazard of being retaken; and probably would have remained there much longer, had not the dawn of morning rendered his companion deſperate. Juſt, however, as the man was forcing him away, Paulo fancied he diſtinguiſhed, by the ſtrengthening light, the roof of that particular building, in whoſe dungeon his maſter was confined, and the appearance of Vivaldi himſelf could ſcarcely have occaſioned a more ſudden burſt of joy; ſucceeded by one of grief. "It is the roof, it is the very roof!" exclaimed Paulo, vaulting from the ground, and clapping his hands; "it is the roof, the roof! O, my maſter, my maſter!

maſter! the roof, the roof!" He continued alternately to exclaim, "My maſter! the roof! my maſter! the roof! till his companion began to fear he was frantic, while tears ſtreamed down his cheeks, and every look and geſture expreſſed the moſt extravagant and whimſical union of joy and ſorrow. At length, the abſolute terror of diſcovery compelled his companion to force him from the ſpot; when, having loſt ſight of the building which incloſed Vivaldi, he ſet off for Naples with a ſpeed that defiled all interruption, and arrived there in the condition, which has been mentioned, having taken no ſleep, and ſcarcely any ſuſtenance, ſince he left the Inquiſition. Yet though in this exhauſted ſtate, the ſpirit of his affection remained unbroken, and when, on the following morning, the Marcheſe quitted Naples, neither his wearineſs, nor the imminent danger, to which this journey muſt expoſe him, could prevent his attending him to Rome.

The rank of the Marcheſe, and the influence he was known to poſſeſs at the court of Naples, were circumſtances that promiſed to have weight with the Holy Office, and to procure Vivaldi a ſpeedy releaſe; but yet more than theſe, were the high connections which the Count di Maro, the friend of the Marcheſe, had in the church of Rome.

The applications, however, which were made to the inquiſitors, were not ſo ſoon replied to as the wiſhes of the Marcheſe had expected, and he had been above a fortnight in that city, before he was even permitted to viſit his ſon. In this interview, affection predominated on both ſides over all remembrance of the paſt. The condition of Vivaldi, his faded appearance, to which the wounds he had received at Celano, and from which

which he was ſcarcely recovered, had contributed ; and his ſituation in a melancholy and terrible priſon, were circumſtances that awakened all the tenderneſs of the father ; his errors were forgiven, and the Marcheſe felt diſpoſed to conſent to all that might reſtore him to happineſs, could he but be reſtored to liberty.

Vivaldi, when informed of his mother's death, ſhed bitter tears of ſorrow and remorſe, for having occaſioned her ſo much uneaſineſs. The unreaſonableneſs of her claims was forgotten, and her faults were extenuated ; happily, indeed, for his peace, the extent of her criminal deſigns he had never underſtood ; and when he learned that her dying requeſt had been intended to promote his happineſs, the cruel conſciouſneſs of having interrupted her's, occaſioned him ſevere anguiſh, and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct towards Ellena at San Stefano, before he could become reconciled to himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

"Your's in the ranks of death."

SHAKESPEARE.

NEAR three weeks had elapſed ſince the Marcheſe's arrival at Rome, and not any deciſive anſwer was returned by the Inquiſition to his application, when he and Vivaldi received at the ſame time a ſummons to attend father Schedoni in his dungeon. To meet the man who had occaſioned ſo much ſuffering to his family, was extremely painful to the Marcheſe, but he was not allowed to refuſe the interview; and at the hour appointed he called at the chamber of Vivaldi; and, followed by two officials, they paſſed on together to that of Schedoni.

While they waited at the door of the priſon-room, till the numerous bars and locks were unfaſtened, the agitation, which Vivaldi had ſuffered, on receiving the ſummons, returned with redoubled force, now that he was about to behold, once more, that wretched man, who had announced himſelf to be the parent of Ellena di Roſalba. The Marcheſe ſuffered emotions of a different nature, and with his reluctance to ſee Schedoni, was mingled a degree of curioſity, as to the event, which had occaſioned this ſummons.

The door being thrown open, the officials entered firſt, and the Marcheſe and Vivaldi, on following, diſcovered the Confeſſor lying on a mattreſs. He did not riſe to receive them, but, as he lifted

lifted his head, and bowed it in obeiſance, his countenance, upon which the little light admitted through the triple grate of his dungeon gleamed, ſeemed more than uſually ghaſtly; his eyes were hollow, and his ſhrunk features appeared as if death had already touched them. Vivaldi, on perceiving him, groaned, and averted his face; but, ſoon recovering a command of himſelf, he approached the mattreſs.

The Marcheſe, ſuppreſſing every expreſſion of reſentment towards an enemy, who was reduced to this deplorable condition, inquired what he had to communicate.

"Where is father Nicola?" ſaid Schedoni to an official, without attending to the queſtion: "I do not ſee him here. Is he gone ſo ſoon, and without having heard the purport of my ſummons? Let him be called."

The official ſpoke to a centinel, who immediately left the chamber.

"Who are theſe that ſurround me?" ſaid Schedoni. "Who is he that ſtands at the foot of the bed?" While he ſpoke, he bent his eyes on Vivaldi, who reſted in deep dejection there, and was loſt in thought, till, arouſed by Schedoni's voice, he replied,

"It is I, Vincentio di Vivaldi; I obey your requiſition, and inquire the purpoſe of it?"

The Marcheſe repeated the demand. Schedoni appeared to meditate; ſometimes he fixed his eyes upon Vivaldi, for an inſtant, and when he withdrew them, he ſeemed to ſink into deeper thoughtfulneſs. As he raiſed them once again, they aſſumed a ſingular expreſſion of wildneſs, and then ſettling, as if on vacancy, a ſudden glare ſhot from them, while he ſaid—"Who is he, that glides there in the duſk?"

His

His eyes were directed beyond Vivaldi, who, on turning, perceived the monk, father Nicola, paſſing behind him.

"I am here," ſaid Nicola: "what do you require of me?"

"That you will bear teſtimony to the truth of what I ſhall declare," replied Schedoni.

Nicola and an inquiſitor who had accompanied him, immediately arranged themſelves on one ſide of the bed, while the Marcheſe ſtationed himſelf on the other. Vivaldi remained at its foot.

Schedoni, after a pauſe, began: "That which I have to make known relates to the cabal formerly carried on by him, the father Nicola, and myſelf, againſt the peace of an innocent young woman, whom, at my inſtigation, he has baſely traduced."

At theſe words, Nicola attempted to interrupt the Confeſſor, but Vivaldi reſtrained him.

"Ellena di Roſalba is known to you?" continued Schedoni, addreſſing the Marcheſe.

Vivaldi's countenance changed at this abrupt mention of Ellena, but he remained ſilent.

"I have heard of her," replied the Marcheſe, coldly.

"And you have heard falſely of her," rejoined Schedoni. "Lift your eyes, my lord Marcheſe, and ſay, do you not recollect that face?" pointing to Nicola.

The Marcheſe regarded the monk attentively, "It is a face not eaſily to be forgotten," he replied; "I remember to have ſeen it more than once."

"Where have you ſeen him, my Lord?"

"In my own palace, at Naples; and you yourſelf introduced him to me there."

"I did,"

"I did," replied Schedoni.

"Why, then, do you now accuſe him of falſhood," obſerved the Marcheſe, "ſince you acknowledge yourſelf to have been the inſtigator of his conduct?"

"O heavens!" ſaid Vivaldi, "this monk, then, this father Nicola, is, as I ſuſpected, the ſlanderer of Ellena di Roſalba!"

"Moſt true," rejoined Schedoni; "and it is for the purpoſe of vindicating—"

"And you acknowledge yourſelf to be the author of thoſe infamous ſlanders!" paſſionately interrupted Vivaldi;—"you, who but lately declared yourſelf to be her father!"

In the inſtant, that Vivaldi had uttered this, he became ſenſible of his indiſcretion, for till now he had avoided informing the Marcheſe, that Ellena had been declared the daughter of Schedoni. This abrupt diſcloſure, and at ſuch a moment, he immediately perceived might be fatal to his hopes, and that the Marcheſe would not conſider the promiſe he had given to his dying wife, however ſolemn, as binding, under circumſtances ſo peculiar and unforeſeen as the preſent. The aſtoniſhment of the Marcheſe, upon this diſcovery, cannot eaſily be imagined; he looked at his ſon for an explanation of what he had heard, and then with encreaſed deteſtation at the Confeſſor; but Vivaldi was not in a ſtate of mind to give any explanation at this moment, and he requeſted his father to ſuſpend even his conjectures till he could converſe with him alone.

The Marcheſe deſiſted for the preſent from further inquiry, but it was obvious that his opinion and his reſolution, reſpecting the marriage of Vivaldi, was already formed.

"You,

"You, then, are the author of thoſe ſlanders!" repeated Vivaldi.

"Hear me!" cried Schedoni, in a voice which the ſtrength of his ſpirit contending with the feebleneſs of his condition, rendered hollow and terrible.—"Hear me!"

He ſtopped, unable to recover immediately from the effect of the exertion he had made. At length, he reſumed.

"I have declared, and I continue to declare, that Ellena di Roſalba, as ſhe has been named for the purpoſe, I conjecture, of concealing her from an unworthy father, is my daughter!"

Vivaldi groaned in the exceſs of his deſpair, but made no further attempt to interrupt Schedoni. The Marcheſe was not equally paſſive. "And was it to liſten to a vindication of your daughter," ſaid he, "that I have been ſummoned hither? But let this Signora Roſalba, be who ſhe may, of what importance can it be to me whether ſhe is innocent or otherwiſe!"

Vivaldi, with the utmoſt difficulty, forbore to expreſs the feelings, which this ſentence excited. It appeared to recall all the ſpirit of Schedoni. "She is the daughter of a noble houſe," ſaid the Confeſſor, haughtily, while he half raiſed himſelf from his mattraſs. "In me you behold the laſt of the Counts di Bruno."

The Marcheſe ſmiled contemptuouſly.

Schedoni proceeded. "I call upon you, Nicola di Zampari, who have declared yourſelf, on a late occaſion, ſo ſtrenuous for juſtice, I call upon you now to do juſtice in this inſtance, and to acknowledge, before theſe witneſſes, that

that Ellena Roſalba is innocent of every circumſtance of miſconduct, which you have formerly related to the Marcheſe di Vivaldi!"

"Villain!" do you heſitate," ſaid Vivaldi to Nicola, "to retract the cruel ſlanders which you have thrown upon her name, and which have been the means of deſtroying her peace, perhaps for ever? Do you perſiſt———"

The Marcheſe interrupted his ſon:—

"Let me put an end to the difficulty, by concluding the interview; I perceive that my preſence has been required for a purpoſe that does not concern me."

Before the Confeſſor could reply, the Marcheſe had turned from him to quit the chamber; but the vehemence of Vivaldi's diſtreſs prevailed with him to pauſe, and thus allowed him to underſtand from Schedoni, that the juſtification of the innocent Ellena, though it had been mentioned firſt, as being the object neareſt to his heart, was not the only one that had urged him to require this meeting.

"If you conſent," added Schedoni, "to liſten to the vindication of my child, you ſhall afterwards perceive, Signor, that I, fallen though I am, have ſtill been deſirous of counteracting, as far as remains for me, the evil I have occaſioned. You ſhall acknowledge, that what I then make known is of the utmoſt conſequence to the repoſe of the Marcheſe di Vivaldi, high in influence, and haughty in proſperity as he now appears."

The latter part of this aſſurance threatened to overcome the effect of the firſt; the pride of the Marcheſe ſwelled high; he took ſome ſteps towards the door, but then ſtopped, and con-

jecturing that the ſubject, to which Schedoni alluded, concerning the liberation of his ſon, he conſented to attend to what Nicola ſhould diſcloſe.

This monk, meanwhile, had been balancing the neceſſity for acknowledging himſelf a ſlanderer againſt the poſſibility of avoiding it; and it was the reſolute manner of Vivaldi, who appeared to have no doubt as to his guilt in this inſtance, that made him apprehend the conſequence of perſiſting in falſhood, not either remorſe of conſcience, or the appeal of Schedoni. He acknowledged then, after conſiderable circumlocution, in which he contrived to defend himſelf, by throwing all the odium of the original deſign upon the Confeſſor, that he had been prevailed upon by his arts to impoſe on the credulity of the Marcheſe, reſpecting the conduct of Ellena di Roſalba. This avowal was made upon oath, and Schedoni, by the queſtions he put to him, was careful it ſhould be ſo full and circumſtantial that even the moſt prejudiced hearer muſt have been convinced of its truth; while the moſt unfeeling muſt have yielded for once to indignation againſt the aſperſer, and pity of the aſperſed. Its effect upon the preſent auditors was various. The Marcheſe had liſtened to the whole explanation with an unmoved countenance, but with profound attention. Vivaldi had remained in a fixed attitude, with eyes bent on father Nicola, in ſuch eager and ſtern regard, as ſeemed to ſearch into his very ſoul; and, when the monk concluded, a ſmile of triumphant joy lighted up his features, as he looked upon the Marcheſe, and claimed an acknowledgment of his conviction, that Ellena had been calumniated. The cold

glance,

glance, which the Marcheſe returned, ſtruck the impaſſioned and generous Vivaldi to the heart, who perceived that he was not only totally indifferent as to the injuſtice, which an innocent and helpleſs young woman had ſuffered, but fancied that he was unwilling to admit the truth, which his judgment would no longer allow him to reject.

Schedoni, meanwhile, appeared almoſt to writhe under the agony, which his mind inflicted upon him, and it was only by ſtrong effort, that he ſuſtained his ſpirit ſo far as to go through with the interrogations he had judged it neceſſary to put to Nicola. When the ſubject was finiſhed, he ſunk back on his pillow, and, cloſing his eyes, a hue ſo pallid, ſucceeded by one ſo livid, overſpread his features, that Vivaldi for an inſtant believed he was dying; and in this ſuppoſition he was not ſingular, for even an official was touched with the Confeſſor's condition, and had advanced to aſſiſt him, when he uncloſed his eyes, and ſeemed to revive.

The Marcheſe, without making any comment upon the avowal of father Nicola, demanded, on its concluſion, the diſcloſure, which Schedoni had aſſerted to be intimately connected with his peace; and the latter now inquired of a perſon near him, whether a ſecretary of the Inquiſition was in the chamber, who he had requeſted might attend, to take a formal depoſition of what he ſhould declare. He was anſwered, that ſuch an one was already in waiting. He then aſked, what other perſons were in the room, adding, that he ſhould require inquiſitorial witneſſes to his depoſition; and was anſwered, that an inquiſitor and two

officials were preſent, and that their evidence was more than ſufficient for his purpoſe.

A lamp was then called for by the ſecretary; but, as that could not immediately be procured, the torch of one of the centinels, who watched in the dark avenue without, was brought in its ſtead, and this diſcovered to Schedoni the various figures aſſembled in his duſky chamber, and to them the emaciated form and ghaſtly viſage of the Confeſſor. As Vivaldi now beheld him by the ſtronger light of the torch, he again fancied that death was in his aſpect.

Every perſon was now ready for the declaration of Schedoni; but he himſelf ſeemed not fully prepared. He remained for ſome moments reclining on his pillow in ſilence, with his eyes ſhut, while the changes in his features indicated the ſtrong emotion of his mind. Then, as if by a violent effort, he half raiſed himſelf, and made an ample confeſſion of the arts he had practiſed againſt Vivaldi. He declared himſelf to be the anonymous accuſer, who had cauſed him to be arreſted by the Holy Office, and that the charge of hereſy, which he had brought againſt him, was falſe and malicious.

At the moment when Vivaldi received this confirmation of his ſuſpicions, as to the identity of his accuſer, he diſcovered more fully that the charge was not what had been ſtated to him at the chapel of San Sebaſtian, in which Ellena was implicated; and he demanded an explanation of this circumſtance. Schedoni acknowledged, that the perſons, who had there arreſted him, were not officers of the Inquiſition, and that the inſtrument of arreſt, containing

containing the charge of elopement with a nun, was forged by himſelf, for the purpoſe of empowering the ruffians to carry off Ellena, without oppoſition from the inhabitants of the convent, in which ſhe was then lodged.

To Vivaldi's enquiry, why it had been thought neceſſary to employ ſtratagem in the removal of Ellena, ſince, if Schedoni had only claimed her for his daughter, he might have removed her without any, the Confeſſor replied, that he was then ignorant of the relationſhip which exiſted between them. But to the further enquiries, with what deſign, and whither Ellena had been removed, and the means by which he had diſcovered her to be his daughter, Schedoni was ſilent; and he ſunk back, overwhelmed by the recollections they awakened.

The depoſitions of Schedoni having been taken down by the ſecretary, were formally ſigned by the inquiſitor and the officials preſent; and Vivaldi thus ſaw his innocence vindicated by the very man who had thrown him among the perils of the inquiſition. But the near proſpect of releaſe now before him failed to affect him with joy, while he underſtood that Ellena was the daughter of Schedoni, the child of a murderer, whom he himſelf had been in ſome degree inſtrumental in bringing to a dreadful and ignominious death. Still, however, willing to hope, that Schedoni had not ſpoken the truth concerning his relationſhip to Ellena, he claimed, in conſideration of the affection he had ſo long cheriſhed for her, a full explanation of the circumſtances connected with the diſcovery of her family.

At this public avowal of his attachment, a haughty impatience appeared on the countenance of the Marcheſe, who forbade him to make further enquiry on the ſubject, and was immediately retiring from the chamber.

"My preſence is no longer neceſſary," he added: "the priſoner has concluded the only detail which I could be intereſted to hear from him; and, in conſideration of the confeſſion he has made as to the innocence of my ſon, I pardon him the ſuffering, which his falſe charge has occaſioned to me and my family. The paper containing his depoſitions is given to your reſponſibility, holy father," addreſſing the inquiſitor; "and you are required to lay it upon the table of the Holy Office, that the innocence of Vincentio di Vivaldi may appear, and that he may be releaſed from theſe priſons without further delay. But firſt I demand a copy of thoſe declarations, and that the copy alſo ſhall be ſigned by the preſent witneſſes."

The ſecretary was now bidden to copy them, and, while the Marcheſe waited to receive the paper, (for he would not leave the chamber till he had ſecured it) Vivaldi was urging his claim for an explanation reſpecting the family of Ellena, with unconquerable perſeverance. Schedoni, no longer permitted to evade the inquiry, could not, however, give a circumſtantial explanation, without partly diſcloſing, alſo, the fatal deſigns which had been meditated by him and the late Marcheſa di Vivaldi, of whoſe death he was ignorant; he related, therefore, little more reſpecting Ellena than that a portrait, which ſhe wore as being her father's, had firſt led to the diſcovery of her family.

While

While the Confeſſor had been giving this brief explanation, Nicola, who was ſomewhat withdrawn from the circle, ſtood gazing at him with the malignity of a demon. His glowing eyes juſt appeared under the edge of his cowl, while, rolled up in his dark drapery, the lower features of his face were muffled; but the intermediate part of his countenance, receiving the full glare of the torch, diſplayed all its ſpeaking and terrific lines. Vivaldi, as his eye glanced upon him, ſaw again the very monk of Paluzzi, and he thought he beheld alſo a man capable of the very crimes of which he had accuſed Schedoni. At this inſtant he remembered the dreadful garment that had been diſcovered in a dungeon of the fortreſs; and, yet more, he remembered the extraordinary circumſtances attending the death of Bianchi, together with the immediate knowledge which the monk had diſplayed of that event. Vivaldi's ſuſpicions reſpecting the cauſe of her death being thus revived, he determined to obtain, if poſſible, either a relief from, or a confirmation of them; and he ſolemnly called upon Schedoni, who, ready condemned to die, had no longer any thing to fear from a diſcloſure of the truth, whatever it might be to declare all that he knew on the ſubject. As he did ſo, he looked at Nicola, to obſerve the effect of this demand, whoſe countenance was, however, ſo much ſhrouded, that little of its expreſſion could be ſeen; but Vivaldi remarked, that, while he had ſpoken, the monk drew his garment cloſer over the lower part of his face, and that he had immediately turned his eyes from him upon the Confeſſor.

With moſt ſolemn proteſtations, Schedoni declared himſelf to be both innocent and ignorant of the cauſe of Bianchi's death.

Vivaldi then demanded by what means his agent, Nicola, had obtained ſuch immediate information, as the warning he had delivered at Paluzzi proved him to have, of an event, in which it appeared that he could be ſo little intereſted; and why that warning had been given.

Nicola did not attempt to anticipate the reply of Schedoni, who, after a momentary ſilence, ſaid, "That warning, young man, was given to deter you from viſiting Altieri, as was every circumſtance of advice or intelligence, which you received beneath the arch of Paluzzi."

"Father," replied Vivaldi, "you have never loved, or you would have ſpared yourſelf the practice of artifices ſo ineffectual to miſlead or to conquer a lover. Did you believe that an anonymous adviſer could have more influence with me than my affection, or that I could be terrified by ſuch ſtratagems into a renunciation of it object?'

"I believed," rejoined the Confeſſor, "that the diſintereſted advice of a ſtranger might have ſome weight with you; but I truſted more to the impreſſion of awe, which the conduct and ſeeming foreknowledge of that ſtranger were adapted to inſpire in a mind like your's; and I thus endeavoured to avail myſelf of your prevailing weakneſs."

"And what do you term my prevailing weakneſs?" ſaid Vivaldi, bluſhing.

"A ſuſceptibility which renders you eſpecially liable to ſuperſtition," replied Schedoni.

"What!

"What! does a monk call ſuperſtition a weakneſs!" rejoined Vivaldi. "But grant he does, on what occaſion have I betrayed ſuch weakneſs?"

"Have you forgotten a converſation which I once held with you on inviſible ſpirits?" ſaid Schedoni.

As he aſked this, Vivaldi was ſtruck with the tone of his voice; he thought it was different from what he had remembered ever to have heard from him; and he looked at Schedoni more intently, that he might be certain it was he who had ſpoken. The Confeſſor's eyes were fixed upon him, and he repeated ſlowly in the ſame tone, "Have you forgotten?"

"I have not forgotten the converſation to which you allude," replied Vivaldi, "and I do not recollect that I then diſcloſed any opinion that may juſtify your aſſertion."

"The opinions you avowed were rational," ſaid Schedoni, "but the ardour of your imagination was apparent, and what ardent imagination ever was contented to truſt to plain reaſoning, or to the evidence of the ſenſes? It may not willingly confine itſelf to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, ſoars after new wonders into a world of its own!"

Vivaldi bluſhed at this reproof, now conſcious of its juſtneſs; and was ſurpriſed that Schedoni ſhould ſo well have underſtood the nature of his mind, while he himſelf, with whom conjecture had never aſſumed the ſtability of opinion, on the ſubject to which the Confeſſor alluded, had been ignorant even of its propenſities.

"I acknowledge the truth of your remark," ſaid Vivaldi, "as far as it concerns myſelf. I have, however, enquiries to make on a point leſs abſtracted, and towards explaining which the evidence of my ſenſes themſelves have done little. To whom belonged the bloody garments I found in the dungeon of Paluzzi, and what became of the perſon to whom they had pertained?"

Conſternation appeared for an inſtant on the features of Schedoni. "What garments?" ſaid he.

"They appeared to be thoſe of a perſon who had died by violence," replied Vivaldi, "and they were diſcovered in a place frequented by your avowed agent, Nicola the monk."

As he concluded the ſentence, Vivaldi looked at Nicola, upon whom the attention of every perſon preſent was now directed.

"They were my own," ſaid this monk.

"Your own! and in that condition!" exclaimed Vivaldi. "They were covered with gore!"

"They were my own," repeated Nicola. "For their condition, I have to thank you,—the wound your piſtol gave me occaſioned it."

Vivaldi was aſtoniſhed by this apparent ſubterfuge. "I had no piſtol," he rejoined, "my ſword was my only weapon!"

"Pauſe a moment," ſaid the monk.

"I repeat that I had no fire-arms," replied Vivaldi.

"I appeal to father Schedoni," rejoined Nicola, "whether I was not wounded by a piſtol ſhot."

"To

" To me you have no longer any right of appeal," ſaid Schedoni. " Why ſhould I ſave you from ſuſpicions, that may bring you to a ſtate like this, to which you have reduced me !"

" Your crimes have reduced you to it," replied Nicola, " I have only done my duty, and that which another perſon could have effected without my aid—the prieſt to whom Spalatro made his laſt confeſſion."

" It is, however, a duty of ſuch a kind," obſerved Vivaldi, " as I would not willingly have upon my conſcience. You have betrayed the life of your former friend, and have compelled me to aſſiſt in the deſtruction of a fellow being."

" You, like me, have aſſiſted to deſtroy a deſtroyer," replied the monk. " He has taken life, and deſerves, therefore, to loſe it. If, however, it will afford you conſolation to know that you have not materially aſſiſted in his deſtruction, I will hereafter give you proof for this aſſurance. There were other means of ſhewing that Schedoni was the Count di Bruno, than the teſtimony of Anſaldo, though I was ignorant of them when I bade you ſummon the penitentiary."

" If you had ſooner avowed this," ſaid Vivaldi, the aſſertion would have been more plauſible. Now, I can only underſtand that it is deſigned to win my ſilence, and prevent my retorting upon you your own maxim—that he who has taken the life of another, deſerves to loſe his own.—To whom did thoſe bloody garments belong ?"

" To myſelf, I repeat," replied Nicola, " Schedoni can bear teſtimony that I received at Paluzzi a piſtol wound."

" Impoſſible," ſaid Vivaldi, " I was armed only with my ſword !"

" You

" You had a companion," obſerved the monk, " had not he fire-arms ?"

Vivaldi, after a momentary conſideration, recollected that Paulo had piſtols, and that he had fired one beneath the arch of Paluzzi, on the firſt alarm occaſioned by the ſtranger's voice. He immediately acknowledged the recollection. " But I heard no groan, no ſymptom of diſtreſs !" he added. " Beſides, the garments were at a conſiderable diſtance from the ſpot where the piſtol was fired ! How could a perſon, ſo ſeverely wounded as thoſe garments indicated, have ſilently withdrawn to a remote dungeon, or, having done ſo, is it probable he would have thrown aſide his dreſs !"

" All that is nevertheleſs true," replied Nicola. " My reſolution enabled me to ſtifle the expreſſion of my anguiſh ; I withdrew to the interior of the ruin, to eſcape from you, but you purſued me even to the dungeon, where I threw off my diſcoloured veſtments, in which ared not return to my convent, and departed by a way which all your ingenuity failed to diſcover. The people who were already in the fort, for the purpoſe of aſſiſting to confine you and your ſervant during the night on which Signora Roſalba was taken from Altieri, procured me another habit, and relief for my wound. But, though I was unſeen by you during the night, I was not entirely unheard, for my groans reached you more than once from an adjoining chamber, and my companions were entertained with the alarm which your ſervant teſtified.——Are you now convinced ?"

The groans were clearly remembered by Vivaldi, and many other circumſtances of Nicola's narration

ration accorded ſo well with others, which he recollected to have occurred on the night alluded to, that he had no longer a doubt of its veracity. The ſuddenneſs of Bianchi's death, however, ſtill occaſioned him ſuſpicions as to its cauſe; yet Schedoni had declared not only that he was innocent, but ignorant of this cauſe, which it appeared from his unwillingneſs to give teſtimony in favour of his agent, he would not have affirmed, had he been conſcious that the monk was in any degree guilty in this inſtance. That Nicola could have no inducement for attempting the life of Bianchi other than a reward offered him by Schedoni, was clear; and Vivaldi, after more fully conſidering theſe circumſtances, became convinced that her death was in conſequence of ſome incident of natural decay.

While this converſation was paſſing, the Marcheſe, impatient to put a concluſion to it, and to leave the chamber, repeatedly urged the ſecretary to diſpatch; and, while he now earneſtly renewed his requeſt, another voice anſwered for the ſecretary, that he had nearly concluded. Vivaldi thought that he had heard the voice on ſome former occaſion, and on turning his eyes upon the perſon who had ſpoken, diſcovered the ſtranger to be the ſame who had firſt viſited him in priſon. Perceiving by his dreſs, that he was an officer of the Inquiſition, Vivaldi now underſtood too well the purport of his former viſit, and that he had come with a deſign to betray him by affected ſympathy into a confeſſion of ſome heretical opinions. Similar inſtances of treachery Vivaldi had heard were frequently practiſed upon accuſed perſons, but he had never fully believed ſuch cruelty poſſible till now, that it had been attempted towards himſelf.

The

The viſit of this perſon bringing to his recollection the ſubſequent one he had received from Nicola, Vivaldi inquired whether the centinels had really admitted him to his cell, or he had entered it by other means; a queſtion to which the monk was ſilent, but the ſmile on his features, if ſo ſtrange an expreſſion deſerved to be called a ſmile, ſeemed to reply, "Do you believe that I, a ſervant of the Inquiſition, will betray its ſecrets?"

Vivaldi, however, urged the inquiry, for he wiſhed to know whether the guard, who appeared to be faithful to their office, had eſcaped the puniſhment that was threatened.

"They were honeſt," replied Nicola, "ſeek no further."

"Are the tribunal convinced of their integrity?"

Nicola ſmiled again in deriſion, and replied, "They never doubted it."

"How!" ſaid Vivaldi. "Why were theſe men put under arreſt, if their faithfulneſs was not even ſuſpected?"

"Be ſatisfied with the knowledge, which experience has given you of the ſecrets of the Inquiſition," replied Nicola ſolemnly, "ſeek to know no more!"

"It has terrible ſecrets!" ſaid Schedoni, who had been long ſilent. "Know, young man, that almoſt every cell of every priſoner has a concealed entrance, by which the miniſters of death may paſs unnoticed to their victims. This Nicola is now one of thoſe dreadful ſummoners, and is acquainted with all the ſecret avenues, that lead to murder."

Vivaldi ſhrunk from Nicola in horror, and Schedoni pauſed; but while he had ſpoken, Vivaldi had again noticed the extraordinary change in

in his voice, and ſhuddered at its ſound no leſs than at the information it had given. Nicola was ſilent; but his terrible eyes were fixed in vengeance on Schedoni.

"His office has been ſhort," reſumed the Confeſſor, turning his heavy eyes upon Nicola, "and his taſk is almoſt done!" As he pronounced the laſt words his voice faltered, but they were heard by the monk, who drawing nearer to the bed, demanded an explanation of them. A ghaſtly ſmile triumphed in the features of Schedoni; "Fear not but that an explanation will come full ſoon," ſaid he.

Nicola fixed himſelf before the Confeſſor, and bent his brows upon him as if he would have ſearched into his very ſoul. When Vivaldi again looked at Schedoni, he was ſhocked on obſerving the ſudden alteration in his countenance, yet ſtill a faint ſmile of triumph lingered there. But, while Vivaldi gazed, the features ſuddenly became agitated; in the next inſtant his whole frame was convulſed, and heavy groans laboured from his breaſt. Schedoni was now evidently dying.

The horror of Vivaldi, and of the Marcheſe, who endeavoured to leave the chamber, was equalled only by the general confuſion that reigned there; every perſon preſent ſeemed to feel at leaſt a momentary compaſſion, except Nicola, who ſtood unmoved beſide Schedoni, and looked ſtedfaſtly upon his pangs, while a ſmile of deriſion marked his countenance. As Vivaldi obſerved, with deteſtation, this expreſſion, a ſlight ſpaſm darted over Nicola's face, and his muſcles alſo ſeemed to labour with ſudden contraction; but the affection was tranſient, and vaniſhed as abruptly as it had appeared. The monk, however, turned

turned from the miſerable ſpectacle before him, and as he turned he caught involuntarily at the arm of a perſon near him, and leaned on his ſhoulder for ſupport. His manner appeared to betray that he had not been permitted to triumph in the ſufferings of his enemy, without participating at leaſt in their horror.

Schedoni's ſtruggles now began to abate, and in a ſhort time he lay motionleſs. When he uncloſed his eyes, death was in them. He was yet nearly inſenſible; but preſently a faint gleam of recollection ſhot from them, and gradually lighting them up, the character of his ſoul appeared there; the expreſſion was indeed feeble, but it was true. He moved his lips as if he would have ſpoken, and looked languidly round the chamber, ſeemingly in ſearch of ſome perſon. At length, he uttered a ſound, but he had not yet ſufficient command of his muſcles, to modulate that ſound into a word, till by repeated efforts the name of Nicola became intelligible. At the call, the monk raiſed his head from the ſhoulder of the perſon on whom he had reclined, and turning round, Schedoni, as was evident from the ſudden change of expreſſion in his countenance, diſcovered him; his eyes, as they ſettled on Nicola ſeemed to recollect all their wonted fire, and the malignant triumph, lately ſo prevalent in his phyſiognomy, again appeared as in the next moment, he pointed to him. His glance ſeemed ſuddenly impowered with the deſtructive faſcination attributed to that of the baſiliſk, for while it now met Nicola's, that monk ſeemed as if transfixed to the ſpot, and unable to withdraw his eyes from the glare of Schedoni's; in their expreſſion he read the dreadful ſentence of his fate, the triumph of revenge and cunning. Struck with this terrible conviction a

pallid

pallid hue overſpread his face ; at the ſame time an involuntary motion convulſed his features, cold trembling ſeized upon his frame, and, uttering a deep groan, he fell back, and was caught in the arms of the people near him. At the inſtant of his fall, Schedoni uttered a ſound ſo ſtrange and horrible, ſo convulſed, yet ſo loud, ſo exulting, yet ſo unlike any human voice, that every perſon in the chamber, except thoſe who were aſſiſting Nicola, ſtruck with irreſiſtible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it. This, however, was impracticable, for the door was faſtened, until a phyſician, who had been ſent for, ſhould arrive, and ſome inveſtigation could be made into this myſterious affair. The conſternation of the Marcheſe and of Vivaldi, compelled to witneſs this ſcene of horror, cannot eaſily be imagined.

Schedoni, having uttered that demoniacal ſound of exultation, was not permitted to repeat it, for the pangs he had lately ſuffered returned upon him, and he was again in ſtrong convulſions, when the phyſician entered the chamber. The moment he beheld Schedoni, he declared him to be poiſoned ; and he pronounced a ſimilar opinion on father Nicola ; affirming, alſo, that the drug, as appeared from the violence of the effect, was of too ſubtle and inveterate a nature to allow of antidote. He was, however, willing to adminiſter the medicine uſual in ſuch caſes.

While he was giving orders to an attendant, with reſpect to this, the violence of Schedoni's convulſions once more relaxed ; but Nicola appeared in the laſt extremity. His ſufferings were inceſſant, his ſenſes never for a moment returned, and he expired, before the medicine, which had been ſent for, could be brought. When it came, however,

however, it was adminiſtered with ſome ſucceſs to Schedoni, who recovered not only his recollection, but his voice; and the firſt word he uttered was, as formerly, the name of Nicola.

"Does he live?" added the Confeſſor with the utmoſt difficulty, and after a long pauſe. The perſons around him were ſilent, but the truth, which this ſilence indicated, ſeemed to revive him.

The inquiſitor, who had attended, perceiving that Schedoni had recovered the uſe of his intellects, now judged it prudent to aſk ſome queſtions relative to his preſent condition, and to the cauſe of Nicola's death.

"Poiſon," replied Schedoni readily.

"By whom adminiſtered?" ſaid the inquiſitor, "conſider that while you anſwer, you are on your death-bed."

"I have no wiſh to conceal the truth," rejoined Schedoni, "nor the ſatisfaction"—he was obliged to pauſe, but preſently added, "I have deſtroyed him, who would have deſtroyed me, and—and I have eſcaped an ignominious death."

He paufed again; it was with difficulty that he had ſaid thus much, and he was now overcome by the exertion he had made. The ſecretary, who had not been permitted to leave the chamber, was ordered to note Schedoni's words.

"You avow then," continued the inquiſitor, "that the poiſon was adminiſtered, both in the caſe of father Nicola and in your own, by yourſelf?"

Schedoni could not immediately reply; but when he did, he ſaid, "I avow it."

He was aſked by what means he had contrived to procure the poiſon, and was bidden to name his accomplice.

"I had

" I had no accomplice," replied Schedoni.

" How did you procure the poiſon then?"

Schedoni, ſlowly and with difficulty, replied, " It was concea ed in my veſt."

" Conſider that you are dying," ſaid the inquiſitor, " and confeſs the truth. We cannot believe what you have laſt aſſerted. It is improbable that you ſhould have had an opportunity of providing yourſelf with poiſon after your arreſt, and equally improbable that you ſhould have thought ſuch proviſion neceſſary before that period. Confeſs who is your accomplice."

This accuſation of falſhood recalled the ſpirit of Schedoni, which, contending with, and conquering, for a moment, corporeal ſuffering, he ſaid in a firmer tone, " It was the poiſon, in which I dip my poniard, the better to defend me."

The inquiſitor ſmiled in contempt of this explanation, and Schedoni, obſerving him, deſired a particular part of his veſt might be examined, where would be found ſome remains of the drug concealed as he had affirmed. He was indulged in his requeſt, and the poiſon was diſcovered within the broad hem of his garment.

Still it was inconceivable how he had contrived to adminiſter it to Nicola, who, though he had been for ſome time alone with him on this day, would ſcarcely have ſo far confided in an enemy, as to have accepted any ſeeming ſuſtenance that might have been offered by him. The inquiſitor, ſtill anxious to diſcover an accomplice, aſked Schedoni who had aſſiſted to adminiſter the drug to Nicola, but the Confeſſor was no longer in a condition to reply. Life was now ſinking apace; the gleam of ſpirit and of character that had returned

to

to his eyes, was departed, and left them haggard and fixed; and preſently a livid corſe was all that remained of the once terrible Schedoni!

While this awful event had been accompliſhing, the Marcheſe, ſuffering under the utmoſt perturbation, had withdrawn to the diſtant grate of the dungeon, where he converſed with an official as to what might be the probable conſequence of his preſent ſituation to himſelf; but Vivaldi, in an agony of horror, had been calling inceſſantly for the medicine, which might poſſibly afford ſome relief to the anguiſh he witneſſed; and when it was brought, he had aſſiſted to ſupport the ſufferers.

At length, now that the worſt was over, and when the ſeveral witneſſes had ſigned to the laſt avowal of Schedoni, every perſon in the chamber was ſuffered to depart; and Vivaldi was re-conducted to his priſon, accompanied by the Marcheſe, where he was to remain till the deciſion of the holy office reſpecting his innocence, as aſſerted by the depoſition of Schedoni, ſhould be known. He was too much affected by the late ſcene to give the Marcheſe any explanation at preſent, reſpecting the family of Ellena di Roſalba, and the Marcheſe, having remained for ſome time with his ſon, withdrew to the reſidence of his friend.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

"Maſter, go on, and I will follow thee
To the laſt gaſp, with truth and loyalty."
SHAKESPEARE.

IN conſequence of the dying confeſſion of Schedoni, an order was ſent from the holy office for the releaſe of Vivaldi, within a few days after the death of the Confeſſor; and the Marcheſe conducted his ſon from the priſons of the Inquiſition to the manſion of his friend the Count di Maro, with whom he had reſided ſince his arrival at Rome.

While they were receiving the ceremonious congratulations of the Count, and of ſome nobles aſſembled to welcome the emancipated priſoner, a loud voice was heard from the antichamber exclaiming, "Let me paſs! It is my maſter, let me paſs! May all thoſe who attempt to ſtop me, be ſent to the Inquiſition themſelves!"

In the next inſtant Paulo burſt into the ſaloon, followed by a group of lacqueys, who, however, pauſed at the door, fearful of the diſpleaſure of their lord, yet ſcarcely able to ſtifle a laugh; while Paulo, ſpringing forward, had nearly overſet ſome of the company, who happened at that moment to be bowing with profound joy to Vivaldi.

"It

"It is my master! it is my dear master!" cried Paulo, and, sending off a nobleman with each elbow, as he made his way between them, he hugged Vivaldi in his arms, repeating, "O, my master! my master!" till a passion of joy and affection overcame his voice, and he fell at his master's feet and wept.

This was a moment of finer joy to Vivaldi, than he had known since his meeting with his father, and he was too much interested by his faithful servant, to have leisure to apologize to the astonished company for his rudeness. While the lacqueys were repairing the mischief Paulo had occasioned, were picking up the rolling snuff-boxes he had jerked away in his passage, and wiping the snuff from the soiled clothes, Vivaldi was participating in all the delight, and returning all the affection of his servant, and was so wholly occupied by these pleasurable feelings as scarcely to be sensible that any persons besides themselves were in the room. The Marchese, meanwhile was making a thousand apologies for the disasters Paulo had occasioned; was alternately calling upon him to recollect in whose presence he was, and to quit the apartment immediately; explaining to the company that he had not seen Vivaldi since they were together in the Inquisition, and remarking profoundly, that he was much attached to his master. But Paulo, insensible to the repeated commands of the Marchese, and to the endeavours of Vivaldi to raise him, was still pouring forth his whole heart at his master's feet. "Ah! my Signor," said he, "If you could but know how miserable I was when I got out of the Inquisition!"——

"He

"He raves!" obſerved the Count to the Marcheſe, "you perceive that joy has rendered him delirious!"

"How I wandered about the walls half the night, and what it coſt me to leave them! But when I loſt ſight of them, Signor, O! San Dominico! I thought my heart would have broke. I had a great mind to have gone back again and given myſelf up; and perhaps, I ſhould too, if it had not been for my friend, the centinel, who eſcaped with me, and I would not do him an injury, poor fellow! for he meant nothing but kindneſs when he let me out. And ſure enough, as it has proved, it was all for the beſt, for now I am here, too, Signor, as well as you; and can tell you all I felt when I believed I ſhould never ſee you again."

The contraſt of his preſent joy to his remembered grief again brought tears into Paulo's eyes; he ſmiled and wept, and ſobbed and laughed with ſuch rapid tranſition, that Vivaldi began to be alarmed for him; when, ſuddenly becoming calm, he looked up in his maſter's face and ſaid gravely, but with eagerneſs, "Pray Signor, was not the roof of your little priſon peaked, and was there not a little turret ſtuck up at one corner of it? and was there not a battlement round the turret? and was there not"——Vivaldi, after regarding him for a moment, replied ſmilingly, "Why truly, my good Paulo, my dungeon was ſo far from the roof, that I never had an opportunity of obſerving it."

"That is very true Signor," replied Paulo, "very true indeed; but I did not happen to think of that. I am certain, though it was

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as I ſay, and I was ſure of it at the time. O Signor! I thought that roof would have broke my heart, O how I did look at it! and now to think that I am here, with my dear maſter once again!"

As Paulo concluded, his tears and ſobs returned with more violence than before; and Vivaldi, who could not perceive any neceſſary connection between this mention of the roof of his late priſon, and the joy his ſervant expreſſed on ſeeing him again, began to fear that his ſenſes were bewildered, and deſired an explanation of his words. Paulo's account, rude and ſimple as it was, ſoon diſcovered to him the relation of theſe apparently heterogeneous circumſtances to each other; when Vivaldi, overcome by this new inſtance of the power of Paulo's affection, embraced him with his whole heart, and, compelling him to riſe, preſented him to the aſſembly as his faithful friend and chief deliverer.

The Marcheſe, affected by the ſcene he had witneſſed, and with the truth of Vivaldi's words, condeſcended to give Paulo a hearty ſhake by the hand, and to thank him warmly for the bravery and fidelity he had diſplayed in his maſter's intereſt. "I never can fully reward your attachment, added the Marcheſe, "but what remains for me to do, ſhall be done. From this moment I make you independent, and promiſe in the preſence of this noble company, to give you a thouſand ſequins, as ſome acknowledgement of your ſervices."

Paulo did not expreſs all the gratitude for this gift which the Marcheſe expected. He ſtammered, and bowed and bluſhed, and at length

length burſt into tears; and when Vivaldi inquired what diſtreſſed him, he replied, "Why, Signor, of what uſe are the thouſand ſequins to me, if I am to be independent! what uſe if I am not to ſtay with you?"

Vivaldi cordially aſſured Paulo, that he ſhould always remain with him, and that he ſhould conſider it as his duty to render his future life happy. "You ſhall henceforth," added Vivaldi, "be placed at the head of my houſhold; the management of my ſervants, and the whole conduct of my domeſtic concerns ſhall be committed to you, as a proof of my entire confidence in your integrity and attachment; and becauſe this is a ſituation which will allow you to be always near me."

"Thank you, my Signor," replied Paulo, in a voice rendered almoſt inarticulate by his gratitude, "Thank you with my whole heart! if I ſtay with you, that is enough for me, I aſk no more. But I hope my Lord Marcheſe will not think me ungrateful for refuſing to accept of the thouſand ſequins he was ſo kind as to offer me, if I would but be independent, for I thank him as much as if I had received them, and a great deal more too."

The Marcheſe, ſmiling at Paulo's miſtake, rejoined, "As I do not perceive, my good friend, how your remaining with your maſter can be a circumſtance to diſqualify you from accepting a thouſand ſequins, I command you, on pain of my diſpleaſure, to receive them; and whenever you marry, I ſhall expect that you will ſhew your obedience to me again, by accepting another thouſand from me with your wife, as her dower."

"This is too much, Signor," ſaid Paulo ſobbing—"too much to be borne!" and ran out of the ſaloon. But amidſt the murmur of applauſe which his conduct drew from the noble ſpectators, for Paulo's warm heart had ſubdued even the coldneſs of their pride, a convulſive ſound from the anti-chamber betrayed the exceſs of emotion, which he had thus abruptly withdrawn himſelf to conceal.

In a few hours, the Marcheſe and Vivaldi took leave of their friends, and ſet out for Naples, where they arrived, without any interruption, on the fourth day. But it was a melancholy journey to Vivaldi, notwithſtanding the joy of his late eſcape; for the Marcheſe having introduced the mention of his attachment to Ellena di Roſalba, informed him, that, under the preſent unforeſeen circumſtances, he could not conſider, his late engagement to the Marcheſa on that ſubject as binding, and that Vivaldi muſt relinquiſh Ellena, if it ſhould appear that ſhe really was the daughter of the late Schedoni.

Immediately on his arrival at Naples, however, Vivaldi, with a degree of impatience, to which his utmoſt ſpeed was inadequate, and with a revived joy ſo powerful as to overcome every fear, and every melancholy conſideration, which the late converſation with his father had occaſioned, haſtened to the *Santa della Piéta*.

Ellena heard his voice from the grate, enquiring for her of a nun, who was in the parlour, and in the next inſtant they beheld each other yet once again.

In ſuch a meeting, after the long uncertainty and terror, which each had ſuffered for the fate

fate of the other, and the dangers and hardſhips they had really incurred, joy was exalted almoſt to agony. Ellena wept, and ſome minutes paſſed before ſhe could anſwer to Vivaldi's few words of tender exclamation: it was long ere ſhe was tranquil enough to obſerve the alteration, which ſevere confinement had given to his appearance. The animated expreſſion of his countenance was unchanged; yet, when the firſt glow of joy had faded from it, and Ellena had leiſure to obſerve its wanneſs, ſhe underſtood, too certainly, that he had been a priſoner in the Inquiſition.

During this interview, he related, at Ellena's requeſt, the particulars of his adventures, ſince he had been ſeparated from her in the chapel of San Sebaſtian; but, when he came to that part of the narration where it was neceſſary to mention Schedoni, he pauſed in unconquerable embarraſſment and a diſtreſs not unmingled with horror. Vivaldi could ſcarcely endure even to hint to Ellena any part of the unjuſt conduct, which the Confeſſor had practiſed towards him, yet it was impoſſible to conclude his account, without expreſſing much more than hints; nor could he bear to afflict her with a knowledge of the death of him who he believed to be her parent, however the dreadful circumſtances of that event might be concealed. His embarraſſment became obvious, and was ſtill increaſed by Ellena's inquiries.

At length, as an introduction to the information it was neceſſary to give, and to the fuller explanation he wiſhed to receive upon a ſubject, which, though it was the one that preſſed moſt anxiouſly upon his mind, he had not yet dared to mention, Vivaldi ventured to declare his knowledge of her having diſcovered her parent to be

living. The ſatisfaction immediately apparent upon Ellena's countenance heightened his diſtreſs, and his reluctance to proceed; believing, as he did, that the event he had to communicate muſt change her gladneſs to grief."

Ellena, however, upon this mention of a topic ſo intereſting to them both, proceeded to expreſs the happineſs ſhe had received from the diſcovery of a parent, whoſe virtues had even won her affection long before ſhe underſtood her own intereſt in them. It was with ſome difficulty, that Vivaldi could conceal his ſurprize at ſuch an avowal of prepoſſeſſion; the manners of Schedoni, of whom he believed her to ſpeak, having certainly never been adapted to inſpire tenderneſs. But his ſurprize ſoon changed its object, when Olivia, who had heard that a ſtranger was at the grate, entered the parlour, and was announced as the mother of Ellena di Roſalba.

Before Vivaldi left the convent, a full explanation, as to family, was given on both ſides, when he had the infinite joy of learning, that Ellena was not the daughter of Schedoni; and Olivia had the ſatisfaction to know that ſhe had no future evil to apprehend from him who had hitherto been her worſt enemy. The manner of his death, however, with all the circumſtances of his character, as unfolded by his late trial, Vivaldi was careful to conceal.

When Ellena had withdrawn from the room, Vivaldi made a full acknowledgment to Olivia of his long attachment to her daughter, and ſupplicated for her conſent to their marriage. To this application, however, Olivia replied, that, though ſhe had long been no ſtranger to their mutual affection, or to the ſeveral circumſtances which had both proved its durability, and tried their fortitude,

ſhe

ſhe never could conſent that her daughter ſhould become a member of any family, whoſe principal was either inſenſible of her value, or unwilling to acknowledge it; and that in this inſtance it would be neceſſary to Vivaldi's ſucceſs, not only that he, but that his father ſhould be a ſuitor; on which condition only, ſhe allowed him to hope for her acquieſcence.

Such a ſtipulation ſcarcely chilled the hopes of Vivaldi, now that Ellena was proved to be the daughter not of the murderer Schedoni, but of a Count di Bruno, who had been no leſs reſpectable in character than in rank; and he had little doubt that his father would conſent to fulfil the promiſe he had given to the dying Marcheſa.

In this belief he was not miſtaken. The Marcheſe, having attended to Vivaldi's account of Ellena's family, promiſed, that if it ſhould appear there was no ſecond miſtake on the ſubject, he would not longer oppoſe the wiſhes of his ſon.

The Marcheſe immediately cauſed a private inquiry to be made as to the identity of Olivia, the preſent Counteſs di Bruno; and, though this was not purſued without difficulty, the phyſician, who had aſſiſted in the plan of her eſcape from the cruelty of Ferando di Bruno, and who was living, as well as Beatrice, who clearly remembered the ſiſter of her late miſtreſs, at length rendered Olivia's identity unqueſtionable. Now, therefore, that the Marcheſe's every doubt was removed, he paid a viſit to the *Santa della Piéta*, and ſolicited, in due form, Olivia's conſent to the nuptials of Vivaldi with Ellena; which ſhe granted him with an entire ſatisfaction. In this interview, the Marcheſe was ſo much faſcinated by the manners of the Counteſs, and pleaſed with the delicacy and ſweetneſs, which appeared in thoſe of Ellena,

that his conſent was no longer a conſtrained one, and he willingly relinquiſhed the views of ſuperior rank and fortune, which he had formerly looked to for his ſon, for thoſe of virtue and permanent happineſs that were now unfolded to him.

On the twentieth of May, the day on which Ellena completed her eighteenth year, her nuptials with Vivaldi were ſolemnized in the church of the *Santa Maria della Piéta*, in the preſence of the Marcheſe and of the Counteſs di Bruno. As Ellena advanced through the church, ſhe recollected, when on a former occaſion ſhe had met Vivaldi at the altar, and, the ſcenes of San Sebaſtian riſing to her memory, the happy character of thoſe, which her preſent ſituation oppoſed to them, drew tears of tender joy and gratitude to her eyes. Then, irreſolute, deſolate, ſurrounded by ſtrangers, and enſnared by enemies, ſhe had believed ſhe ſaw Vivaldi for the laſt time; now, ſupported by the preſence of a beloved parent, and by the willing approbation of the perſon, who had hitherto ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed her, they were met to part no more; and, as a recollection of the moment when ſhe had been carried from the chapel glanced upon her mind, that moment when ſhe had called upon him for ſuccour, ſupplicated even to hear his voice once more, and when a blank ſilence, which, as ſhe believed, was that of death, had ſucceeded; as the anguiſh of that moment was now remembered, Ellena became more than ever ſenſible of the happineſs of the preſent.

Olivia, in thus relinquiſhing her daughter ſo ſoon after ſhe had found her, ſuffered ſome pain, but ſhe was conſoled by the fair proſpect of happineſs, that opened to Ellena, and cheered, by conſidering, that, though ſhe relinquiſhed, ſhe

ſhould

ſhould not loſe her, ſince the vicinity of Vivaldi's reſidence to *La Piéta*, would permit a frequent intercourſe with the convent.

As a teſtimony of ſingular eſteem, Paulo was permitted to be preſent at the marriage of his maſter, when, as perched in a high gallery of the church, he looked down upon the ceremony, and witneſſed the delight in Vivaldi's countenance, the ſatisfaction in that of my "old Lord Marcheſe," the penſive happineſs in the Counteſs di Bruno's, and the tender complacency of Ellena's, which her veil, partly undrawn, allowed him to obſerve, he could ſcarcely refrain from expreſſing the joy he felt, and ſhouting aloud, "*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"*

* O happy day! O happy day!

CHAP. XVIII.

"Ah! where ſhall I ſo ſweet a dwelling find!
For all around, without, and all within,
Nothing ſave what delightful was and kind,
Of goodneſs favouring and a tender mind,
E'er roſe to view."

THOMSON.

THE fête which, ſome time after the nuptials, was given by the Marcheſe, in celebration of them, was held at a delightful villa, belonging to Vivaldi, a few miles diſtant from Naples, upon the border of the gulf, and on the oppoſite ſhore to that which had been the frequent abode of the Marcheſa,

chesa. The beauty of its situation and its interior elegance induced Vivaldi and Ellena to select it as their chief residence. It was, in truth, a scene of fairy-land. The pleasure-grounds extended over a valley, which opened to the bay, and the house stood at the entrance of this valley, upon a gentle slope that margined the water, and commanded the whole extent of its luxuriant shores, from the lofty cape of Miseno to the bold mountains of the south, which, stretching across the distance, appeared to rise out of the sea, and divided the gulf of Naples from that of Salerno.

The marble porticoes and arcades of the villa were shadowed by groves of the beautiful magnolia flowering ash, cedrati, camellias, and majestic palms; and the cool and airy halls, opening on two opposite sides to a colonade, admitted beyond the rich foliage all the seas and shores of Naples, from the west; and to the east, views of the valley of the domain, withdrawing among winding hills wooded to their summits, except where cliffs of various-coloured granites, yellow, green, and purple, lifted their tall heads, and threw gay gleams of light amidst the umbrageous landscape.

The style of the gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of Italy; except "Where a long alley peeping on the main," exhibited such gigantic loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste.

On this jubilee, every avenue and grove, and pavilion was richly illuminated. The villa itself, where each airy hall and arcade was resplendent with lights, and lavishly decorated with flowers and the most beautiful shrubs, whose buds seemed

to pour all Arabia's perfumes upon the air, this villa reſembled a fabric called up by enchantment, rather than a ſtructure of human art.

The dreſſes of the higher rank of viſitors were as ſplendid as the ſcenery, of which Ellena was, in every reſpect, the queen. But this entertainment was not given to perſons of diſtinction only, for both Vivaldi and Ellena had wiſhed that all the tenants of the domain ſhould partake of it, and ſhare the abundant happineſs which themſelves poſſeſſed; ſo that the grounds, which were extenſive enough to accommodate each rank, were relinquiſhed to a general gaiety. Paulo was, on this occaſion, a ſort of maſter of the revels; and, ſurrounded by a party of his own particular aſſociates, danced once more, as he had ſo often wiſhed, upon the moon-light ſhore of Naples.

As Vivaldi and Ellena were paſſing the ſpot, which Paulo had choſen for the ſcene of his feſtivity, they pauſed to obſerve his ſtrange capers and extravagant geſticulation, as he mingled in the dance, while every now-and-then, he ſhouted forth, though half breathleſs with the heartineſs of the exerciſe "*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"

On perceiving Vivaldi, and the ſmiles with which he and Ellena regarded him, he quitted his ſports, and advancing, "Ah! my dear maſter," ſaid he, "do you remember the night, when we were travelling on the banks of the Celano, before that diabolical accident happened in the chapel of San Sebaſtian; don't you remember how thoſe people, who were tripping it away ſo joyouſly, by moonlight, reminded me of Naples and the many merry dances I had footed on the beach here?"

"I remember it well," replied Vivaldi.

"Ah!

" Ah! Signor *mio*, you ſaid at the time, that you hoped we ſhould ſoon be here, and that then I ſhould friſk it away with as glad a heart as the beſt of them. The firſt part of your hope, my dear maſter, you was out in, for, as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradiſe; but the ſecond part is come at laſt;—for here I am, ſure enough! dancing by moonlight, in my own dear bay of Naples, with my own dear maſter and miſtreſs, in ſafety, and as happy *almoſt* as myſelf; and with that old mountain yonder, Veſuvius, which I, forſooth! thought I was never to ſee again, ſpouting up fire, juſt as it uſed to do before we got ourſelves put into the Inquiſition! O! who could have foreſeen all this! *O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"

" I rejoice in your happineſs, my good Paulo," ſaid Vivaldi, " almoſt as much as in my own; though I do not entirely agree with you as to the comparative proportion of each."

" Paulo!" ſaid Ellena, " I am indebted to you beyond any ability to repay; for to your intrepid affection your maſter owes his preſent ſafety. I will not attempt to thank you for your attachment to him; my care of your welfare ſhall prove how well I know it; but I wiſh to give to all your friends this acknowledgment of your worth, and of my ſenſe of it."

Paulo bowed, and ſtammered, and writhed and bluſhed, and was unable to reply; till, at length, giving a ſudden and lofty ſpring from the ground, the emotion which had nearly ſtifled him burſt forth in words, and " *O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*" flew from his lips with the force of an electric ſhock. They communicated his enthuſiaſm to the whole company, the words paſſed like lightning from one individual to another, till

Vivaldi

Vivaldi and Ellena withdrew amidſt a choral ſhout, and all the woods and ſtrands of Naples re-echoed with—*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"

"You ſee," ſaid Paulo, when they had departed, and he came to himſelf again, "you ſee how people get through their misfortunes, if they have but a heart to bear up againſt them, and do nothing that can lie on their conſcience afterwards: and how ſuddenly one comes to be happy, juſt when one is beginning to think one never is to be happy again! Who would have gueſſed that my dear maſter and I, when we were clapped up in that diabolical place, the Inquiſition, ſhould ever come out again into this world! Who would have gueſſed when we were taken before thoſe old devils of Inquiſitors, ſitting there all of a row in a place under ground, hung with black, and nothing but torches all around, and faces grinning at us, that looked as black as the gentry aforeſaid; and when I was not ſo much as ſuffered to open my mouth, no! they would not let me open my mouth to my maſter!——who, I ſay, would have gueſſed we ſhould ever be let looſe again! who would have thought we ſhould ever know what it is to be happy! Yet here we are all abroad once more! All at liberty! And may run, if we will, ſtraight forward, from one end of the earth to the other, and back again without being ſtopped! May fly in the ſea, or ſwim in the ſky, or tumble over head and heels into the moon! For remember, my good friends, we have no lead in our conſciences to keep us down!"

"You mean ſwim in the ſea, and fly in the ſky, I ſuppoſe," obſerved a grave perſonage near him, "but as for tumbling over head and heels

into

into the moon! I don't know what you mean by that!"

"Pſhaw!" replied Paulo, "who can ſtop, at ſuch a time as this, to think about what he means! I wiſh that all thoſe, who on this night are not merry enough to ſpeak before they think, may ever after be grave enough to think before they ſpeak! But you, none of you, no! not one of you! I warrant, ever ſaw the roof of a priſon, when your maſter happened to be below in the dungeon, nor know what it is to be forced to run away, and leave him behind to die by himſelf. Poor ſouls! But no matter for that, you can be tolerably happy, perhaps, notwithſtanding; but as for gueſſing how happy I am, or knowing any thing about the matter.——O! it's quite beyond what you can underſtand. *O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*" repeated Paulo, as he bounded forward to mingle in the dance, and "*O! giorno felice!*" was again ſhouted in chorus by his joyful companions.

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THE END.